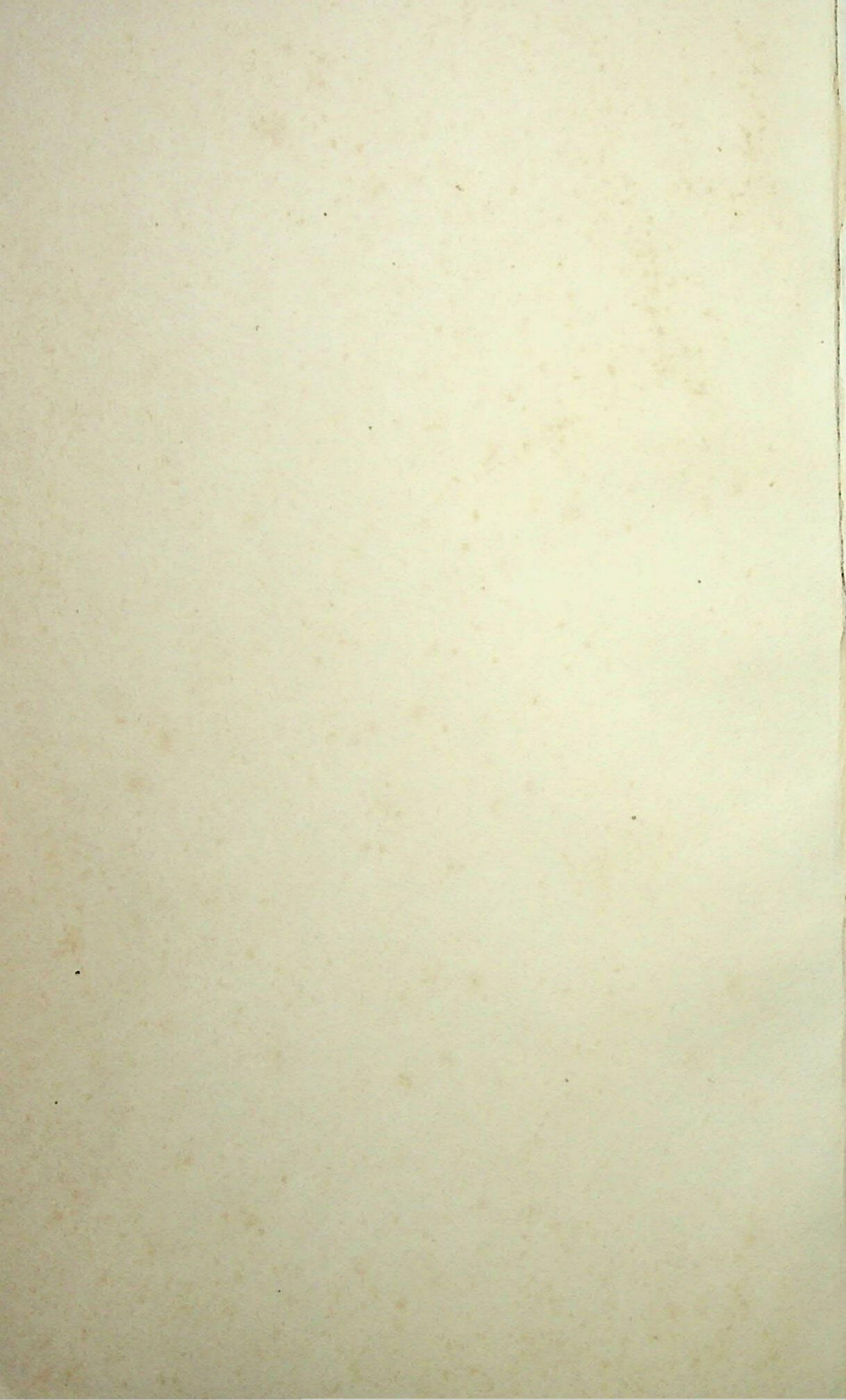
Makers of Indian Literature

ŚRĪHARṢA

A.N. Jani



Sahitya Akademi



Śrīharṣa

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd Century A.D.
Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

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Contents

Chapter One

Life

Śrīharṣa[1], the author of the last of the five *mahākāvyas* has given a few glimpses of his life in the concluding verse at the end of each canto as well as in the epilogue stanzas at the end of his poem– *Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ*. (=*Nc*) These are as follows:–

Śrīharṣa was the son of Śrī Hīra, the top-most poet of his times, and Māmalladevī (I.145) for whom he had high regard (XII.133). He had perfectly mastered the science of logic and reasoning (X.138) and his arguments were powerful enough to silence his opponents (XXII. 153). His speech was as pleasant as the autumnal moon (XV. 193); and his poetry was as sweet as nectar (XV. 153). He was self-controlled (I.145) and being an adept in the precepts of the Yogaśāstra, he realised the Absolute – the ocean of delight – in trance (XXII. 153). His poem was an outcome of his meditation on the *cintāmaṇimantra* (I.145). He thrashed out a new track in the field of poetry (VIII.109) and never allowed any chance of introducing novel features in his poem, to escape (XIX.67); he, therefore, was proud of his poem and looked down upon the carping critics who could not appreciate it. He proudly admits that he had wantonly made his poem difficult and that it will give pleasure, like nectar, only after proper mental exertion on the part of the reader and that it is not easily intelligible without the help of a *guru* (XXII.150-152). He was highly honoured by the king of Kanauj who personally offered him as a mark of respect a seat and two betel-leaves (XXII.153). Over and above *Nc* he wrote following works :–

Sthairyavicāraṇaprakaraṇa (IV.128), Śrīvijayapraśasti (V.138), Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya (VI.113), Gauḍorvīśakulapraśasti (VII.110), Arṇavavarṇana (IX.160), Chindapraśasti (XVII.222), Śivaśaktisiddhi (XVII.154) and Navasāhasāṅkacaritacampū (XXII.149).

Over and above this information supplied by the poet himself

we get detailed information about him from following works :–

(1) Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita's Commentary (A.D. 1297)

(2) Prabandhakośa of Rājaśekhara (A.D. 1348)

(3) Gadādhara's commentary (not later than A.D. 1444)

(4) Vidyāpati's Puruṣaparīkṣā (15th Cent. A.D.)

(5) A Ms (dated A.D. 1711)

The account recorded by Rājaśekhara is a more detailed one. It gives the following information :–

In the court of Jayantacandra[2], the king of Banāras (Vārāṇasī), there was, among other paṇḍits, a Brāhmiṇ called Hīra, whose son was Śrīharṣa. Once Hīra was defeated in a discussion with another Paṇḍita[3] of the court. Hīra could not live long to bear the heavy grief of his defeat. When he was lying on his death-bed, he called his most brilliant son and exhorted him to take revenge upon his rival. Śrīharṣa agreed and after the premature demise of his father, the young Śrīharṣa, entrusting his family to his relatives, set out for studies. Under various teachers he mastered the different branches of knowledge such as logic, rhetorics, music, arithmetic, astronomy, *mantraśāstra,* grammar and so on. He meditated upon the *cintāmaṇimantra* acquired through the grace of some teacher, for a period of one year, on the sacred banks of the Gaṅgā. The Goddess Tripurā revealed Herself before him and conferred upon him a gift of unsurpassable eloquence[3a]. But Śrīharṣa's sharp intelligence proved to be a curse to him as his learned arguments were unintelligible to others. He propitiated the Goddess, once more, and on Her advice, blunted his sharp and all-grasping intelligence by taking curds at midnight. Now the people could follow him. He then composed numerous works headed by the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍa-khādya.* After this, he returned to Banāras and informed the king about his arrival. The king, along with Hīra's rival and other paṇḍits, came to receive the poet who praised the king as under :–

> "Oh ladies! do not mistake this king for Cupid, just because he is the son of Govinda and possesses excellent physical charms; because Cupid makes ladies his weapon to conquer the globe, while this one makes the armoured rivals as helpless as ladies."[4]

All were extremely pleased to hear such an extraordinary praise. Śrīharṣa now gazed at his father's rival and challenged him with these words :–

"The Goddess of Learning sports with me, whether it may be the rosy bed of poetry or the thorny bed of logic. The ladies get the same enjoyment, provided the lover is agreeable to them, whether the bed is well-furnished or is simply a bare ground."

The rival paṇḍit, realising the brilliant achievements of Śrīharṣa, admitted his defeat and began to flatter him with the following words :–

"There are many powerful animals in the forest, but the valour of a lion alone is praised– at whose roaring, the other fearstricken animals give up their joy."

On hearing this, Śrīharṣa was pacified[5]. They became friends on the advice of the king who richly rewarded the poet.

Once, when the poet was well-settled, the king requested him to compose some extraordinary work. The poet, after this request, composed an ornate epic entitled *Naiṣadhīyacarita*[6], and showed it to the king who advised him to go to Kashmir for approval of his poem at the hands of Sarasvatī who was presiding there in person. Śrīharṣa, accordingly, went there, showed the poem to the paṇḍits and placed it in the hands of the Goddess. But lo! it was flung away by her. The poet expostulated with Her on this unexpected treatment to his composition. The Goddess, thereupon, explained the reason of Her disgust by saying that he had described Her in one place (XI.66) as a consort of Viṣṇu, and thus offended Her by robbing Her of Her virginity. The poet replied to this allegation by saying that he was simply following the account as given by the *purāṇas* wherein she is so described. The Goddess, being satisfied with this explanation, took the poem in Her hand and appreciated it. Now, Śrīharṣa requested the paṇḍits to introduce him and his poem to the king Mādhavadeva and to give a certificate of approval for his poem, which he could show to his patron king. But the jealous and ill-hearted paṇḍits did not respond and Śrīharṣa had to wait for an opportunity. He sold all his possessions one by one to maintain himself.

Once he was chanting *rudramantra* near a well, when two royal maid-servants came there to fetch water. There ensued a quarrel between them on the precedence and from exchange of words, they came to blows. Both went to the king to complain. When the king asked for a witness, they reported that some brāhmiṇ

was sitting there. Śrīharṣa was thus brought to the king's presence. But he confessed that he was an alien to that country and as such he could not understand their language. However, he guaranteed that he was in a position to reproduce the very words of theirs. At the order of the king, he reproduced verbatim the whole quarrel of the ladies. The king who was highly pleased and astonished with this wonderful and unique performance, asked him about his personal history. He told the king everything about himself. The king got wild and reproached the paṇḍits for their misbehaviour with the poet and ordered each of them to carry the poet to his place individually and to honour him. Śrīharṣa recited a stanza (XXII.150) at that moment. The paṇḍits now repented and paid him due honour. The king also favoured him and sent him back to Vārāṇasi[7]. On his return, he reported the matter to his patron. The *Naiṣadhīya-carita*, thenceforth, became current and enjoyed unique popularity.

While Śrīharṣa was away, Padmākara, the minister of the king went to Anahillapura in Gujarat and brought from there a widow-Padmini[8], Sūhavadevī by name, with the permission of the king Kumārapāla, for the king Jayantacandra, who married her. This Sūhavadevī was very proud and asked people to address her as *Kalābhāratī* on account of her proficiency in various arts. Śrīharṣa, on account of his learning, was also popular as 'Narabhāratī'. Being jealous of Śrīharṣa's achievements, she called him once and asked him: 'Who are you?' The poet replied, 'I am *kalāsarvajña*'. The treacherous queen, thereupon, ordered the poet to prepare a pair of shoes for her and to exhibit, thereby, his art. Her intention, in asking him thus, was to satisfy her vanity. She knew the result both ways. If Śrīharṣa denies, his ignorance will be exposed and he shall have to give up his title. If, on the other hand, he accepts the proposal, he will be defiled by the impurity attached to this act and will be degraded from his caste. But Śrīharṣa, who was more than a match for her, consented and prepared, from birch-bark, a pair of shoes and put it on her feet, in a manner befitting a cobbler. However, disgusted with such ill-treatment, Śrīharṣa after having informed the king about this sad and degrading event, took *sannyāsa* and passed the rest of his life on the banks of the Gaṅgā.

According to an account current amongst the Kāśmīri paṇḍits, which is recorded by Dr. Bühler[9], Mammaṭa was a maternal uncle of Śrīharṣa. A subsequent part of the story, which is not recorded

by Dr. Bühler, is that "Śrīharṣa, having composed his master poem, showed it to his maternal uncle Mammaṭa, the great rhetorician. Mammaṭa liked the work very much and expressed his deep regret that he had not seen it earlier. When the young poet was glowing with pride and self-complacency, the great critic explained that, to him the work was invaluable, not for its merits, but for its defects and that he would have been saved from a lot of trouble in hunting out defects from a large number of literary works for the chapter on flaws (*doṣas*) in his *Kāvyaprakāśa*, had he only come across the book before writing that chapter as the *Naiṣadhīyacarita* bristled with mistakes of every variety. Being challenged by the irate author, to point out a single defect, Mammaṭa is said to have mentioned the stanza *"tava vartmani vartām śivam* (II.62), which is addressed by Nala to the swan going to Damayantī and which is intended to mean 'may your path be propitious', but which may also be construed as *'tava vartma nivartatām śivam'* and gave rise to a meaning exactly the reverse of that intended by the speaker."[10]

Though this anecdote is authentic in the opinion of some scholars[11], it is incredible to believe that it is so, as Mammaṭa flourished in circa 1050 A.D. while Śrīharṣa was removed from him at least by a century, and hence it will be safe to conclude in the words of Dr. De[12] that the anecdote is "more witty than authentic" and indicates only the artificialities of the poem that did not escape the notice of the critics.

As far as the relatives of Śrīharṣa are concerned, we know nothing about his wife or children. But we know that he had a grandson called Kamalākaragupta, who wrote a *bhāṣya* on the *Naiṣadhīyacarita*. Again the poet Harihara, who brought a manuscript of the *Naiṣadhīyacarita*, to Gujarat, probably was born in the family of Śrīharṣa.[13] Some Citreśvara Śarma who copied a manuscript of the *Naiṣadhīyacarita* in Śaka 1677 (A.D. 1755) was also born in this family.

Personality

Apart from this information, the *Nc* itself gives us some information about the poet's ideas and ideals.

Even though a philosopher of the first order, he was not an atheist. He believed in God and in devotion to Him (X.73); his respect for the Gods and God-worship is clear from XV. 1–5. He does not

seem to be a staunch devotee of any god, as evinced from the praise of all the different incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in canto XXI. His regard for Sarasvatī is easily noticeable in canto XII.23 and in the different epithets given to Her. His devotion to Lord Viṣṇu can be inferred from His being highly extolled in X.69, 90. Similarly his devotion to Lord Śaṅkara is easily inferable from XIV. 88 as well as from the benedictory stanza at the commencement of the khaṇḍana. This verse shows that even though he had reverence for all the gods, his favourite deity was Hara especially His *ardhanārīśvara* form. He believed in the doctrine of grace (XIV. 8,9) and in the theory of *karma* (XXII. 66, 99, 134). He refers to the meritorious deeds of the past (V.17). Like all Sanskrit writers he was a fatalist (I.15, VI. 102-3, IX. 126, XIII.50, XV. 64, XXI. 147). His respect for the scriptures is seen in I.6 and in XIII. 49 where he calls them the third eye. He believed in the theory of heredity (XXII.67). He sincerely loved his relatives (XIII.52), and was keen and alert (III.97). He held the Sanskrit language in high esteem (X.34, 38, 57, 59). His modesty and high regard for Nala are seen in I.3, XV.86. His patriotism is very remarkable. In VI.97 he is praising the Bhārata in the most glorificatory terms.

He seems to be a follower of either the Maitrāyaṇī or the Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* as is clear from an imagery in XIX.7, where he refers to the method of marking the *udātta* accent with a vertical line above, which is found only in the aforesaid *saṃhitas.*

FOOTNOTES

1. It should be noted that our poet's name is Śrīharṣa and not Śrī Harṣa. He himself mentions his name in one of the epilogue stanzas (XXII.153) as Śrī Śrīharṣa where first Śrī is an honorific prefix and second one forms the part of the name.
2. According to Gadādhara, Śrīharṣa was the court-poet of Govindacandra, the grandfather of Jayantacandra.
3. Rājaśekhara does not give the name of his rival. Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita however, names him as Udayana, the author of Lakṣaṇāvali, etc., whose views are refuted by Śrīharṣa, in his philosophical treatise, *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya.*

3a. The Ms. (dated A.D 1711) gives details of this *sādhanā* and subsequent defeat of Udayana: For details Jani, A.N. *JMSU,* XIV No.1, (1965). Pp. 131-134.

4. *Govindanandanatayā ca vapuḥśriyā ca,*
ṛmā'smin nṛpe kuruta kāmadhiyam taruṇyaḥ/

astrīkaroti jagatāṃ vijaye smaraḥ strī-
ratrī janaḥ punaranena vidhīyate strī//

There is a play upon the words *strī* and *astrī* in this stanza, by which the poet establishes the king's excellence over Cupid by the figure *vyatireka*. The word *nandana* (lit. a delighter) in Govindanandana, should be interpreted as a grandson and not as a son, as is done by Rājaśekhara, who describes Jayantacandra, as the son of Govindacandra, instead of Vijayacandra as is suggested by a comparison of the king with Cupid (Aniruddha, an incarnation of *kāma*), who was the grandson of Govinda (i.e. Kṛṣṇa)

5. Some describe this incident of the meeting of Śrīharṣa with Udayana in a slightly different manner. According to them Śrīharṣa, while entering the court of the king after his studies, was laughed at by Udayana who addressed him as *Gaurgaurāgataḥ* (a bull has come; a bull has come). The word 'bull', it should be remembered, is used in Sanskrit for a blockhead). Śrīharṣa, who could not bear this insult, retorted to him in a verse :

   kim gavi gotvamutāgavi gotvam
   yadi gavi gotvam nahi mayi tattvam/
   agavi ca gotvam tava yadi sādhyam
   bhavatu bhavatyapi samprati gotvam//

   (*Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyam*–
   intro. P. 5, L.S. Dravid, edn.)

   The stanza is in the usual dialectic style of the *bhāṣyas* and means: 'Is the *gotva* (the state of being a bull) in a bull or in a non-bull? If it is in a bull, then it is not in me (because I am non-bull). If you want to prove *gotva* in a non-bull, let it be in you as well (because you are also a non-bull)'

   Udayana then confessed his defeat, but Śrīharṣa wrecked his vengeance further by refuting the former's views in his *khaṇḍana*.

6. Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita's account regarding the composition of the *Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ* differs from that of Rājaśekhara. He says: 'The poet, desirous of writing the *khaṇḍana* to refute the views of Udayana, who had insulted his father, saw that his mind was perpetually perturbed by the four *puruṣārthas*. So he fulfilled them in the *Muktikṣetra* at Banaras and after having attained tranquility of mind, he wrote the work and refuted the arguments of his antagonist. But later on, seeing that this work could not satisfy the literary people, as it was full of dry arguments, the poet, to please them, wrote a poem full of different sentiments'. Gadādhara also differs from Rājaśekhara in this respect and gives the following account :–

   Śrīharṣa was the best among the royal paṇḍits of the king Govindacandra of Banaras. He had dedicated himself to the philosophical studies and had written works like *khaṇḍana*. Other jealous paṇḍits, who were thinking very highly of their poetic achievements, were laughing at him every day, when he entered the court, with the words: "Here comes the dry desert incarnate, with the *śamī* trees of *tarka* in abundance!" Once Śrīharṣa came to know of this, through one of his partisans and to exhibit his poetic powers he wrote a *mahākāvya* called *Nalacarita* and presented it to the king who being highly pleased with it offered thenceforth two seats to the poet– one among the *Tarkavedins* (logicians) and the other among the *Sāhityavedins* (poets). He also offered him two betel leaves and a title *Kavipaṇḍita* (Poet-Philosopher).

7. Vidyāpati gives a different account in connection with the approval of the

poem. According to him Śrīharṣa was a poet of Bengal and went to Banaras for the approval of his poem. There was a great paṇḍit called Koka, who had become indifferent to worldly pleasures and who continued to be ever deep in meditation on the Supreme. Śrīharṣa read his poem, each noon, following Koka along the road when he was going to perform his daily ablutions at Maṇikarṇikā. Many days passed but Koka did not utter a single word regarding the merits or demerits of the poem. Śrīharṣa, getting impatient, charged him, once, that he was not lending his ears to his poem. To this Koka replied that his intention was to give his judgement only after hearing the whole of the poem. To convince Śrīharṣa further, he straightway recited all the verses of the poem which he had heard during this period. Śrīharṣa being astonished and delighted at this wonderful feat, threw himself before Koka's feet. Koka, after praising the merits of the poem, pointing out its defects and discussing other details, filled the heart of Śrīharṣa with joy.

8. A category of women, emitting fragrance of lotus from their body.
9. Kāśmīr Report (Extra No. of *IBBRAS* 1877), 9.68.
10. Dr. Chatterji : *Cal. Ori. l*, Vol. III, No. 6, pp.153-54. The original stanza which runs as:

    tava vartmani vartatām śivam,
    punarastu tvaritaṃ samāgamaḥ/
    ayi sādhaya sādhayepsitam,
    smaraṇīyāḥ samaye vayam vayaḥ-// was misconstrued and explained as under :-

    Tava śivam vartma nivartatām/
    sa tvam punaḥ mā āgamaḥ/
    ayi sadhe (ādhinā saheti sādhih, tatsambuddhau) asādhaya īpsiṭam/
    he vayaḥ vayam samaye (mṛtyoranantaram prasaṅge) prāpte smaraṇīyāḥ//

    Cf. Baladeva Upadhyaya, Saṃskṛtakavicarcā p. 380 ; M.P. Dviṿedi : Naiṣadhacaritacarcā, p. 20 n.
11. Dr. Chatterji: *op. cit.*, p. 154; Baladeva Upadhyaya: *op. cit.*, 381.
12. *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 325, n.4.
13. Rājaṣekhara : *Prabandhakośa, Hariharaprabandha.*

Chapter Two

Home

It is very difficult to say anything definite regarding the home of Śrīharṣa. We have seen in the previous chapter that the epilogue stanzas give us some information regarding our poet, but nowhere we find a reference to his native place. One of the concluding stanzas (XXII. 153) tells us that the poet was highly honoured by the king of Kanauj and Dr. Watve[1] emphatically says that Śrīharṣa's native place was none but Kanauj. But Jayacandra, the king of Kanauj, who patronised our poet as seen in the previous chapter, ruled also over Banaras; so Smt. Akṣaykumārī Devī remarks – "Srīharṣa lived in Vārāṇasī during the reign of Jayacandra (1168-1194) for whose entertainment he wrote this poem."[2]

The anecdote which describes Mammaṭa as the meternal uncle of Śrīharṣa, as well as the fact recorded in XVI. 131 that the poem was highly appreciated by Kāśmīr paṇḍits well-versed in all the fourteen lores, may tempt one to connect Śrīharṣa with Kāśmīr.

The ancient authorities which are not unanimous on this point, also do not throw any light on the present problem. Thus Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita seems to connect Śrīharṣa with Banaras. Rājaśekhara, in his *Harṣakaviprabandha* speaks of Banaras as not only the birth place of Śrīharṣa, but also the native place of Śrīharṣa's father, whom he describes as the court poet of Jayacandra. But curiously enough, the same authority in his *Hariharakaviprabandha*, describes Harihara, who according to him was born in the family of Śrīharṣa, as a native of Bengal. If Gadādhara, on one hand, connects the author of the *Nc* with Banaras, Vidyāpati, on the other, clearly speaks of Bengal as his native place – a view which is corroborated by two Bengali scholars.[3]

Thus it will be clear that four different places, viz. Kanauj, Banaras, Kashmir and Bengal are claimed by different scholars as the home of Śrīharṣa. But the scholars who favour the view of

Kanauj and Banaras do not give any evidence except the authority of Rājaśekhara. Similarly Kāśmīr is also not a serious contender, as we have seen in the previous chapter that the anecdote regarding Mammaṭa and Śrīharṣa is unauthentic. Again the appreciation of the poem by the Kashmirian paṇḍits, which goes against the authority of Rājaśekhara, who records an act of ill-treatment to our poet at the hands of these paṇḍits, cannot establish Kashmir origin of the author of the *Nc* who is described as an alien to that place by Rājaśekhara. The name Māmalladevī (Śrīharṣa's mother), which sounds somewhat Kashmirian, can at the most suggest Śrīharṣa's connection with Kashmir on the mother's side. Thus the claims of Kanauj, Banaras and Kashmir to be the home of our poet, rest on flimsy grounds.

Shri Nilkamal Bhattacharya has tried, for the first time, to prove that Śrīharṣa was a Bengali. His arguments, along with some other observations of the present writer, are given below :

Bengali Diction

Some words which are peculiar to the Bengali language are found in the *Nc*. They are :–

(1) *Fāla*– The word *'fāla'* in *'dvifālabaddhāḥ'* (I. 16), which is rare, is, however, found in the Assamese language, where it means side or section. Prof. Handiqui (p. 594) says that the expression *'dvifālabaddhāḥ'* would be *'dufāle bandhā'* in Assamese. It should be remembered that Assam is an adjoining place to Bengal.

(2) *Ālepana*– (II. 26; XV. 12) is a word, which is variously explained by the commentators and which, according to Nārāyaṇa and Īśānadeva means rice-paste mixed with turmeric, to paint walls and floors, corresponds to modern Bengali word *alpanā*.

(3) *Udayabhāskara*– (XVIII. 103) means a kind of camphor, which, according to Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita, is found in *Gauḍa*.

(4) *Laladḍimba*– The use of the word *'laladḍimba'* (XXII. 51) which means a 'top' is also very significant. The modern Bengali word for a top is *Lāṭima*. Īśānadeva says that in his time the Bengali word for a top was *'lāḍimba'*. The poet seems to have coined the word *'laladḍimba'* from the word *'lāḍimba'* or its variant, current in his time

in his mother tongue, viz. Bengali. The modern Assamese word for a top is *'lāṭuma'* and reminds one the word *'laṭṭu'* in Gujarati. Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita says that in Bengali *'ḍimba'* was the word used for a top, and Nārāyaṇa corroborates him by saying that *'ḍimba'* or *lala(ḍ)-dimba* was the word current in Bengal for a top, while in Maharashtra and Kanauj it was called *'bhavarā'*. (*Cf.* modern Gujarati word *bhamaraḍo*). Thus Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita, whose remark on the word *udayabhāskara* is equally significant, and Nārāyaṇa, seems to suggest that Śrīharṣa was a Bengali.

(5) *Annamīna*– The word *'annamīna'* (XIV. 78) is nothing but a Sanskrit equivalent of the Bengali expression *'māchhbhāt'* or 'fish and rice.' It is a by-word with the Bengalis and thus clearly brings out the Bengali traits of our poet.

(6) *Ghughu*– *'ghughu'* is a Bengali word for a dove and a poetic fancy based on this word is found in XIX. 61 where the natural *'ghu'* sound of a dove is imagined to be the grammatical term of that name, viz. *ghusajñā* given by Pāṇini to certain roots in grammar.

Features of the Bengali Tongue

Further the mode of his pronunciation noticeable in his poem also shows that his mother tongue was Bengali.

"The Bengali tongue, it should be known", says Shri N.K. Bhattacharya, "observes no distinction in the pronunciation of the three sibilants (श, ष, स); the letters ण, व and च (the last when it begins a word) are in Bengali invariably pronounced like न, ब and ज respectively; the ष in क्ष is treated invariably as ख; the *visarga* is conspicuous by shortness, and there are other such peculiarities holding the Bengali tongue as distinct from others. This trend of our poet has revealed itself through his alliterations. Our poet is exceedingly fond of alliteration. There is hardly a verse where alliteration has not its share, and in most places it partakes of the character of an analogue (*yamaka*) and so cannot be slighted. This fondness of our poet for alliteration or any verbal feat having transcended his poetry has made itself felt even in his philosophy. Two quotations are made from the *khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa* :–

(1) *tadadvaita-śrutestāvad bādhaḥ pratyakṣataḥ kṣataḥ*
nānumānādi tam kartum tavāpi kṣamate mate
advaitāgamanāsīre sādhu sā dhunvatī parān
sevāmevārayatyarthā-patti-patti-paramparā

(2) *samasta-loka-śāstraikamatyamāśritya nṛtyatoḥ*
kā tadastu gatistat-tadvastudhīvyavahārayoḥ

Under such circumstances we may reasonably conclude that wherever the adoption of the Bengali mode of pronunciation gives us prominent cases of alliterations, analogue-ridden or otherwise, that is there the pronunciation intended by the poet. The truth of this will be ascertained from the following illustrations :–

1. श, ष, स – *amī tatastasya vibhūṣitam sitam* (I.57); *ayogabhājo' pi nṛpasya paśyatā* (I.100); *sakhā sakhāyaḥ sravadaśravo mama* (I.136); *kīṭān daśataḥ sataḥ kvacit* (II.4); *ajñāsiśuḥ strī-śiśu-bāliśāstam* (X.32); *bālāmabhāṣata sabhāsatatapragalbhā* (XI.16); *aśvairaśvaira-vegaiḥ* (XII.100) etc.
2. ज, य – *manastu yam nojjhatu jātu yātu* (III. 59); *upeyamādhurya-madhairya-sarji* (VI. 93); *manuṣyajanmanyapi yanmano jane* (IX. 34); *yātum tato jātu na yātudhānaḥ* (X. 11); *tarupatrajanmā yanmārutaḥ* (XI. 39) etc.
3. ण, न – *puṇyena manye punaranyajanma* (VIII. 33); *ananda- mahārṇavair navaiḥ* (XII. 2); *manye'maranirjharinyā* (XXII. 21) etc.
4. ब, व – *bahalam vahan bahu (I. 110); bubhuje vibhuḥ* (IV. 60); *bubudhire vibudhendrāḥ* (V. 60); *trivibudhī bubudhe na* (V. 72); *jīvapibam śivam vadan* (IX. 124) etc.
5. क्ष – *sakhyamikṣate* (I. 38); *abhikhyā-bhikṣādhunā* (VII. 104); *saukhya-lakhyaḥ* (XI.108); *sakhyau sakṣaumabhāve'pi* (XX. 129) etc.
6. *Visarga*– (The peculiarity attaching to the *visarga* is prominent in the analogue alone. Hence that alone is considered here)–
sakalo bhavatyā . . . gunalobhavatyāḥ (III. 115);
mṛgasya nābhi . . . saurabhavāsanābhiḥ (XXII. 80)
7. *Miscellaneous*– *rāśirasīn mahasām* (I. 1); *asamvare śambara*– (I.53); *abāhyamījyate* (II.78); *āsannanāyaka-*

viṣaṇṇa (XI. 12); *pankajasakhya śikṣā* (XI. 102); *sajja-śayyam* (XXII. 2).

Like his fondness for alliteration his fondness for rhyme too is so distinctly manifest in the *Naiṣadha* that it may be called a regular mania of the poet. A few examples may be quoted:–

(1) *dhāryaḥ kathamkāramaham bhavatyā*
viyadvihārī vasudhaika-gatya (III. 15)

(2) *aśakyaśaṅkā vyabhicārahetur*
vāṇī na vedā yadi santu ketu (III. 78)

(3) *apām hi tṛptāya na vāridhārā*
svādhuḥ sugandhiḥ svadate tuṣārā (III. 93)

(4) *taṃ kāpi mene smarameva kanyā*
bheje manobhūvaśabhūyamanyā (VIII. 6)

(5) *madhyeśabham sa'vatatāra bālā*
gandharvavidyādharakaṇṭha nālā
tratyīmayībhūtavalī vibhaṅgā
sāhitya-nirvartita-dṛk-taraṅgā (X. 73)

Such examples are profuse, not only in the *Naiṣadha*, but also in the *khaṇḍana* so poor in verses. It is therefore no wonder that the influence of the Bengali tongue will be perceived in this rhyme too. Thus we have–

(1) *vacasāmapi gocharo na yaḥ*
sa tamānandamavindata dvijaḥ (II. 1)

(2) *āsthitāvitathatāguṇa-pāśas*
tvādṛśā sa viduṣā durapāśaḥ (V. 130)

(3) *chhāyāsu rūpam bhuvi vīkṣya tasya*
phalam dṛśorānaśire mahiṣyaḥ (VI. 43)

(4) *candrādhikaitanmukhacandrikāṇām*
darāyatam tatkiraṇād ghanānām (VII. 44)

(5) *kārtavīryabhidureṇa daśāsye*
reṇukeva bhavatā sukhanāśye (XXI. 68).

Bengali Customs

The poem refers, in many places, to customs which are prevalent in Bengal even to-day. They are given below :–

(1) The custom of producing a peculiar sound called *ulūlu* which is known, to-day, as *uludhvani* in Bengal, is mentioned in XIV. 51, where the ladies, when Damayantī garlanded Nala as a

token of selecting him as her lover, are described to have produced the *ululudhvani.* "Now everybody knows," remarks Shri Bhattacharya, "that the *ulūlu,* though extended as a thing to Assam and Orissa as well, is, as a name confined to Bengal alone. The same finds corroboration in Nārāyaṇa's comment: *"vivāhādyutsave strīṇām dhavalādi-maṅgalagītiviśeṣo gauḍadeśe ulūlu-rityucyate"* (i.e. the term *'ulūlu'* is used in Gauḍa for a class of festive songs indulged in on festive occasions like marriage, etc.)– where Gauḍa, in the opinions of the experts, is Bengal. Mallināthaʼs interpretation of the term, though slightly diverging from Nārāyaṇa's (*ulūlurityevamrūpaḥ kaścid harṣaṇātmakaḥ mukhoccāryo dhvaniviśeṣa utsavādau strībhiruccāryate ityudīcyānāmācāraḥ*) viz. he has termed it a custom of the North, also; when we view it from his own country, the South, points to the same conclusion, at least in part. Experience also tells us that, excepting Assam, Bengal and Orissa, nowhere else in North India is this practice to be met with. There too, the union of the name and thing, as observed above, is peculiar to the Bengal alone."

(2) Other Bengali custom, referred to in the poem, is the use of the conch bangle. "This too," says Shri Bhattacharya, "as the writer has come to learn from his investigation, is characteristic of Bengal alone. 'The conch bangle and vermilion' is a common saying for an unwidowed woman in Bengal. The connection in which it finds mention in the *Naiṣadha* is this. 'The bride's arms, united with auspicious conch bangles, appeared as if they were being attended upon by fresh grown lotus-stalks for acquiring tenderness from them' (XV. 45). That this practice of wearing conch bangles is seen only in Gauḍa or Bengal finds support also from Nārāyaṇa, whose words are: *gauḍadeśe vivāhakāle śaṅkhavalaya dhāraṇamācāraḥ'.* (The wearing of conch-bangles by the bride at marriage is a practice prevalent in Gauḍa). Just as the wearing of conch-bangles characterises the beginning of married life, so does the breaking of them characterise the beginning of widowhood. The poet has referred to this second point also, in connection with his description of a certain king (The king of Kāncī) who attended the *svayaṃvara,* as follows: 'Swans in the shape of his glories carrying off lotus-stalks in the shape of conch-bangles breaking on the hands of the youthful consorts of the rival heroes sport in fountains of the tears of the same wives of his enemies (XII. 35)."

Śrīharṣa "was not only an inhabitant of the country of conch bangles," says Shri Bhattacharya, "but was also conversant with the art or with the bracelet-making industry." As it is conducted in Bengal at present, the conch shells are cut up into sections which later can be finished into bracelets by polishing and inscribing with patterns. The implement used in cutting them up is a peculiar saw of 'a deep crescent-like form'. This saw is referred to in *Naiṣadhīycarita* XIX. 57.

(3) The third Bengali custom, found in the poem, is the tying of the hands of the bridegroom and the bride with a *kuśa* blade at marriage. Shri Bhattacharya says that it is "no scriptural injunction, but a usage (*kuśaiḥ pāṇibandhanam deśācāraḥ*-Nārāyaṇa, p. 635), prevalent in Bengal, and, so far as I have been able to learn from investigation, in Bengal only. The poet has introduced this in the *Naiṣadha* in the following connection: 'The hand of the bridegroom is a delighter in homicide (i.e. in war), while that of the bride is a stealer of the lustre of a lotus (being equally beautiful). Is it for this reason that in the well-governed kingdom these two (a murderer and a thief) were bound with stiff *kuśa*? (XVI. 14)."

The same scholar gives his concluding remark, in connection with the three customs referred to above, thus: "Now if, as we have seen, the three customs above alluded to are not found in the country (Vidarbha or Naiṣadha) in relation to which they have been introduced, are we (not) justified in inferring that these are the customs of the poet's own country? Nārāyaṇa too, in his comment on the *ulūlu* expressed the same opinion, namely, that the poet alluded to the custom of his own country (*svadeśa-rītiḥ kavinoktā*). If so, then think what that country should be? Should it not be the same country of Gauḍa or Bengal, where the three customs unite?"

"Besides the three places indicated above", continues the same scholar, "the poet has in many other places followed the customs of Bengal or his own country. Such are:–

(4) The painting of the floors and walls of a house with the pigment of rice powder on festive occasions (XV. 12).

(5) The wearing of a crest and the holding of a mirror by the bridegroom while starting on the marriage procession (XV. 60,70).

(6) The entrance of the married couple into a room specially designed for the occasion, in which they are to pass the night in company with their friends (XVI. 46). This room is called, in Bengali, 'Bāṣarghar' and the practice (called *ādipātā* in Bengali) of looking into the room through the holes, resorted to by the young friends of the bride is also referred to in the present stanza.

(7) Niceties of fish and flesh in marriage feasts (XVI. 76, 81, 82, 87 etc.) The nicety of fish and flesh is a notable feature of Bengal. Excepting Kashmir nowhere else in India does a fish meal constitute a prominent part of a banquet like Bengal. 'Fish and rice' is a by-word with the Bengali, and the same has its exact counterpart in our poet's *'annamīna'* (XIV. 78).

(8) Again, vermilion is a close association of the hair-parting of a married woman (whose husband is alive) in Bengal, and our poet's predilection for this custom of Bengal has led him to introduce the thing even in Vidarbha where saffron is seen. In the act he has not sacrificed consistency, having shown it not in the gynaeceum of Vidarbha itself, but in the bevy of the royal consorts who had been invited to the wedding. The connection is this: when the royal consorts who had come to attend the nuptials bowed at the feet of Damayantī with the express intimation of winning her intercession against chances of widowhood at the hands of Nala, the lac of her feet appeared on their heads like auspicious vermilion for the longevity of their husbands (XV. 55). That saffron is currently or profusely used in Vidarbha may be gathered from our poet's own words. In one place he says: "Where the large tank infused with the saffron coming from the beautiful ladies while bathing, does not, like an unappeased woman, clear up by the whole night' (II. 77). In another: "Where at every sunset the saffron shops shone like the rays of the sunk-down Sun having tarried on earth." (II. 90).

Other Bengali customs, which are not noted by Shri Bhattacharya, are as under:–

(9) While describing Damayantī during her marriage decoration, the poet speaks (XV. 34) of a line drawn from the corner of her eye and reaching up to her ears. Nārāyaṇa who generally calls such customs as Bengali customs, as seen above, does not say so here but says that it is a custom current among the ladies of the countries in the East. Thus this custom seems to be in vogue

in Bengal which is in the East, and corroborates the view that Śrīharṣa hailed from Bengal.

(10) The poet describes Damayantī, in XIV. 37, as a *pānthadurgā*, when she was taken by Sarasvatī in the middle of the passage before the suitors seated in the *svayaṃvara* hall, Nārāyaṇa, in his alternative explanation of the term, explains it as a travelling image of Durgā, and refers to the idol of Durgā carried on a platform in the streets on festive occasions. This custom, which, as informed by Prof. Handiqui (p. 574), is still followed in Bengal and Assam on the Vijayādaśamī day of the great Durgāpūjā festival, further convinces that Bengal was the home of Śrīharṣa.

(11) The custom of decorating the entrance ground of the bride's place with banana plants, which is referred to in XVI. 8 and which, according to Prof. Handiqui (p. 225), is current even now, in some parts of India (e.g. Assam) lends further strength to the present issue.

(12) In XIX. 55, while describing the morning, the poet compares the day to a barber lopping off the braid of darkness of the night which is compared to a woman. This apparently curious and somewhat indecorous custom of removing the locks of hair of a lady, which, being the sign of widowhood, is taken to be inauspicious, becomes at once justifiable, when we know that in Bengal even to-day, the hair of girls is removed twice or thrice till they become seven or eight years old, so that they may not lose it due to serious illness or some such unexpected accident and that they may get luxuriant growth of the same.

Some of these customs, individually speaking, are more or less to be found in other parts of India, as seen above, but as observed by Shri Bhattacharya (p. 173), collectively they are specialities of Bengal alone.

Sārasvata Mantra

That Bengal was the land of our poet, is further corroborated by his devotion to the *sārasvata mantra* after the *tantra*. "For, Bengal," says Shri Bhattacharya, "is not simply the great centre of *tantra*, it is its nursery. The influence of this *tantra* is fully reflected in our poet's character too. The realisation of the *cintāmaṇi mantra* is the effect of that. This finds allusion in XIV. 88-90 of the *Naiṣadha*."

This view of Shri Bhattacharya is supported further by Shri Nalini Natha Das Gupta, who tries to prove that Śrīharṣa was a native of Bengal, on the authority of a title *miśra* given to him by Vidyāraṇya and Varada Pandita, and associates him with the king Vijayasena of the Sena dynasty of Bengal, by adducing arguments based on the two works of the poet, viz. *Gauḍorvīśakulapraśasti* and *Vijayapraśasti*, the latter of which, according to Bhavadeva (and not Gopīnātha as believed by Das Gupta on the authority of Mitra's MS),[4] is in praise of Vijayasena, the lord of Gauḍa. He, more over, finds a covert allusion to this king in V. 124, where the adjectives *Vīrasenakuladīpa* and *Candravamśavasati* given to Nala, are equally applicable to Vijayasena, whose dynasty also claims descent from Vīrasena, and the connection of whose race with the moon is brought out by the inscriptions of the Senas where their race is connected with the *'auṣadhinātha'* (moon). Similarly the laudation of the king of Gauḍa in XI. 96-100, is highly significant according to Shri Das Gupta, who again finds a covert allusion to same Vijayasena who, being Karnatic by origin, was dark and hence compared with a cloud in XI. 98. The same scholar tries to harmonise the conflicting accounts of Vidyāpati and Rājaśekhara thus: "As Vijayasena of Gauḍa ceased to rule in A.D. 1158 and Jayacandra of Kanauj and Banaras came after him, it becomes indubious that Śrīharṣa, who outlived Vijayasena, repaired from Gauḍa to the court of Jayacandra, which, on the one hand, is exactly in keeping with the version of Vidyāpati, and, on the other, renders incredible all the details of the story of Rājaśekhara Sūri, except that the poet's name was Hīra and that he was a contemporary of Jayacandra.

Dr. De's Objections

Dr. De[5] refutes the argument based on features of Bengali tongue by observing that "the indiscriminate use, in alliteration and chiming of the three sibilants, the two nasals, 'b' and 'v', 'y' and 'j' as sounds of equivalent value is not definitely conclusive as it is sanctioned by rhetoricians."

On the practice of *ulūlu* sound, Dr. De says–"Śrīharṣa's Bengali origin need not follow. . . from his use of the word *ulūlu* ". . . K.K. Handiqui (pp. 541-42) has shown that it is not an exclusively

Bengali custom, being found in some Jain writers of Western India."[6]

On the custom of wearing conch bangles he remarks – "Similar remarks apply to the reference (XV. 45) to the custom of wearing conch bangles which is also mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* (*Virāṭa* XI. 1) and *Kādambarī*."[7]

Dr. De's Objections Examined

Above objections are raised by Dr. De on some of the arguments advanced by these two scholars– especially of the former. He calls their attempt "wholly unconvincing". On the names of Hīra and Mamalladevī (Śrīharṣa's parents), he further observes that "these are hardly Bengali names". But this objection based on the names is groundless being indecisive, as the names of one province are sometimes adopted by the other, as is seen in case of Talhaṇa (the brother of a Gujarati commr. Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita), whose name apparently looks Kashmir–like. On the contrary, the style of prefixing '*Śrī*' before poet's and his father's name (XXII.153 and epilogue stanzas respectively) is typically Bengali. In spite of Shri Tagore's revolt against this practice; it is yet in vogue. *Cf.* e.g. the names like 'Shri Aurobindo', 'Shri Shrikumara Bandopadhyaya' (Head of the Bengali Dept., Calcutta). Similarly the practice of suffixing the word *Devī* after the name of a woman, as in Māmalladevī (epilogue stanzas) is also typically Bengali.

The objections of Dr. De will prove only this much that the customs like *ulūlu* and conch bangles were fond in places other than Bengal but they cannot prove that they were not in vogue in Bengal in Śrīharṣa's time as they are prevalent even to-day in that country. Thus the arguments which are not conclusive themselves, may be taken as corroborative to prove that Śrīharṣa was a Bengali – a conclusion strengthened by the external evidence given below. Moreover, it seems from Dr. De's unworthy evaluation of the poem, as well as from his own words such as "it would be an acquisition of dubious value to Bengal if its Bengal origin were finally proved," that he is interested in setting aside the claim of Bengal as being the native place of Śrīharṣa.

External Evidence

There are three independent traditions from different quarters

of India, according to which the poet was an inhabitant of Bengal. First is a tradition of Gujarat recorded by Rājaśekhara Sūri, in the *Hariharakaviprabandha*, who calls Harihara, born in Śrīharṣa's family, *gauḍadeśīyaḥ*. The other is of the South recorded by Nārāyaṇa whose remarks are quoted above. The third, which is recorded by Vidyāpati, is from Bengal itself. But the most conclusive evidence is found in a list published by Muni Jinavijayaji,[8] which records a *bhāṣya* on the *Nc* by Śrīharṣa's grandson, called Kamalākara Gupta, whose title Gupta being most common among the Bengalis, settles the problem almost certainly.

Conclusion

However, looking to the conflicting nature of the evidence, it will be better to conclude that Śrīharṣa was a Bengali by blood and his father being patronized by the king of Kanauj, was living at his court. The same honour was extended to Śrīharṣa as well. His works, which have not come down to us, will help us, when found out, in arriving at a final decision. Till then Bengal may be accepted provisionally as Śrīharṣa's home.

FOOTNOTES

1. Saṃskṛtakāvyāce Pañcaprāṇa, P. 231. Prof. Emeneau (*Semitic & Oriental Studies*, Vol. XI) also accepts, tentatively, Kanauj as Śrīharṣa's locality.
2. *HSL* , P. 157.
3. Nilkamal Bhattacharya : *Sarasvatī Bhavana Studies*, Vol. III (1924), Pp. 170-194; Nalini Nath Das Gupta : *Indian Culture*, Vol. II, Pp. 576-79.
4. Vide A.N. Jani : Gopīnātha or Bhavadeva? *Jl. O. I.* Vol. II, No. 4, June 53, Pp. 370-73.
5. De, S.K. : Sanskrit Literature under Pāla Kings of Bengal, *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, (1939), Pp. 263-283, P. 266, n.6.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Vide 'A short catalogue of some important works on Grammar, Lexicon, Metrics, Poetry and Rhetorics in Sanskrit and Other Languages', Purātattva (*Guj. periodical*) Vol. II, No. 4, Pp. 418-28.

Chapter Three

Works

Only two works – the *Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ* and the *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍakhādya* – of Śrīharṣa have come down to us. But from the account of Rājaśekhara, who informs that Śrīharṣa had composed more than hundred works, it seems that he was a prolific writer. This is corroborated further by the epilogue stanzas, which mention as many as eight works of our poet, and by the *Khaṇḍana* which refers to his other work called *Īśvarābhisandhi.* The several catalogues of Mss, which attribute several works to our poet, also support the view that Śrīharṣa might have written many works, most of which are gulped by the omnivorous time. We shall divide these works into two groups:– (I) The works of Śrīharṣa mentioned in his extant works. The authorship of these works need not be questioned as they are claimed in the epilogue stanzas which represent genuine record; and (II) The works which are attributed to Śrīharṣa in the catalogues of Mss. The authorship of these works is not as certain as the works of the previous group, as they are sometimes attributed to some other writer also. A discussion regarding the nature, contents and authorship of these works– arranged alphabetically– is given below :

I. WORKS MENTIONED IN THE *NAIṢADHĪYACARITAṂ* AND THE *KHAṆḌANAKHAṆḌAKHĀDYA*

(1) Arṇavavarṇana

It is mentioned in *Nc* IX.160. "It is obviously a description of the beauties and traditions of the ocean", says Dr. Krishnamachariar (P.181), who seems to follow Aufrecht[1]. However, Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar remarks: "*Arṇavavarṇana* has been wrongly translated by 'description of the sea'. And this *Arṇava* undoubtedly is Arṇorāja, who belonged to Chahaman dynasty of Sambhar, who was a contemporary of the Chalukya Kumārapāla, and for whom

we have the date V.E 1196 = A.D. 1139."[2] But this does not seem to be probable as generally *varṇana* does not mean a *carita* and Vidyādhara, the oldest commentator, also describes it as *samudrasya varṇanaṃ*. This is further corroborated by a stanza which describes the sea and which is attributed to Śrīharṣa[3].

(2) Chindapraśasti

This work, which is referred to in *Nc* XVII.222, is a poem according to commentator Narahari.

According to Shri R.P. Chanda, this Chinda is "Lalla of the Chinda family, whose 'Dewal Praśasti', is dated in A.D. 992"[4]. But Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar, who is followed by Dr. Krishnamachariar (P.181), identifies him with "the Chinda king of Gayā, referred to in an inscription dated 1813 after Buddha's *nirvāṇa* = A.D. 1176." Aufrecht calls it an "Encomium of the King Canda".

(3) Gauḍorvīśakulapraśasti

The name of the present work, which is mentioned in *Nc* VII.110, shows that it is a poem eulogising the family of the king of the Gauḍa (Bengal) country. The scholars, however, are not unanimous in identifying this Gauḍa king. Thus, according to Shri R.P. Chanda, he "was Mahīpāla-I". Shri R.D. Sen[5] seems to identify him with Ādiśūra of Bengal, who invited five Brāhmiṇs from Kanauj to Bengal and among them Śrīharṣa was one. Shri N.D. Das Gupta opines that this is a work in honour of the Sen dynasty as "in the Second half of the 12th cent. the dynasty that was reigning in Gauḍa was the Sen dynasty."[6] Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar does not see, in this work, any reference "to any specific ruler of the Gauḍa country".

(4) Īśvarābhisandhi

Śrīharṣa refers, five times, to this work, in his *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*. Like *Khaṇḍana*, this also seems to be a philosophical work discussing the concept of God. The nature and contents of this work are easy to imagine from the quotations given below. It seems to have been divided into several chapters such as 'Svaprakāśavāda' (The God is self-luminous) Jñātatāvāda' (The God is Jñānaviṣaya) and 'Vedaprāmāṇya' (The authority of the Vedas) etc.

However it is curious to note that in one place, the author refers to it in future tense meaning thereby that the book was not written yet, while all the other references are in the past tense. This difficulty can be solved by saying that the chapter on 'Svaprakāśavāda' was not written, when he referred to this work while other chapters were perhaps ready. It is not wise to say that he had written two independent works of this name. Thus it becomes clear that the *Khaṇḍana* and the *Īśvarābhisandhi* were simultaneously written.

(5) Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya

This work, which is referred to in the *Nc* VI.113, has, fortunately, come down to us. The title literally means– 'A sweet eatable of refutation". Just as the *Nc* occupies a very high place in the field of poetry so does the *Khaṇḍana* in the field of Philosophy. It is "the greatest work of Advaita dialectics. It is one long dissertation on the vanity of philosophy, setting forth the inability of the human mind to compass those exalted objects which its speculative ingenuity suggests as worthy of its pursuit. In the spirit of Nāgārjuna, he analyses the common categories with minuteness and accuracy and takes the reader through a long and arduous process of dissection to establish the simple truth that nothing can be conclusively proved to be either true or false. Everything is doubtful except universal consciousness. His belief in the ultimate reality of spirit marks him off from Buddhist nihilism (I. 5). He discusses at great length of *pramāṇas* of the *Nyāya*, its theory of causation, and argues that the *Nyāya* is busy with apparent existence and not reality. The diversity of things is not ultimate (I. 9) while the Absolute is, though never known."[7] Śrīharṣa refutes many definitions of Udayana, the author of *Lakṣaṇāvali* and other works. The work is known for its abstruseness and as such there are many commentaries on it.

Śrīharṣa refers to this work in the epilogue stanza to the sixth canto of his poem, while the twenty-first canto of the poem is referred to in the *Khaṇḍana*. This mutual reference has led some to think that both these works were simultaneously written by the poet. But it demands too much from credulity to believe that the two works, entirely different in character, were written simultaneously. Again, as seen above, the *Īśvarābhisandhi* was

simultaneously written with the *Khaṇḍana,* and as such the three works – viz. the *Nc,* the *Khaṇḍana* and the *Īśvarābhisandhi* – cannot be simultaneous production of a person. Thus it will be safe to conclude that the two philosophical works were written simultaneously and the poem was written before the *Khaṇḍana.* The epilogue stanza which refers to the *Khaṇḍana,* thus does not seem to be synchronous with the production of the *Nc.* However, the tradition, recorded by Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita and Gadādhara, speaks of the priority of the *Khaṇḍana.* It is probable that the tradition might have been based on the epilogue stanza, which refers to the *Khaṇḍana* and that Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita and Gadādhara may not be aware of the reference to the *Nc* in the *Khaṇḍana* as none of them seems to be a student of philosophy.

Śrīharṣa seems to be very proud of his philosophical work and assures in third verse, the students that even simple cramming of his work will make them invincible in dialectic discussions.

This work is, however, challenged by the great logician Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya of Mithila (12th cent. A.D.). His *Tattvacintāmaṇi,* where he refutes the *Khaṇḍana;* is refuted in its turn by Vācaspati (A.D. 1350) who re-established the views of Śrīharṣa in his work called *Khaṇḍanoddhāra.*

(6) Navasāhasāṅkacarita

This is referred to in the *Nc* XXII. 149, according to which it is a *campū* – a poem mixed with prose. Dr. Bühler informs that "The Jesalmir Bhandara contained only ninety years ago a copy of his (i.e. Śrīharṣa's) *Sāhasāṅkacarita,* though it is not to be found there any longer."

It is difficult to say who this king was as there are many kings bearing the title 'Sāhasāṅka'. According to Vidyādhara, he is a Gauḍa king. Īśānadeva follows Vidyādhara but in his alternative explanation, which is also found in Viśveśvara Bhaṭṭa, he indentifies this Sāhasāṅka with Vikramāditya. Gopīnātha identifies him with the king of Kashi. Narahari, on the other hand, identifies him with Bhojarāja.

Shri R.P. Chanda identifies *Sāhasāṅka* "with the Parmar king Sindhurāja of Malwa, who, according to Padmagupta's *Navasāhasāṅkacarita,* had the *biruda Navasāhasāṅka* and succeeded Vākpati after A.D. 994." But Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar conjectures that

"perhaps *Navasāhasāṅka* may be an epithet of Jayacandra himself".

Shri P.N. Purnaiya[8] identifies him with the sovereign of Gādhipura (i.e. Kanauj), who was the patron of Śrīkṛṣṇa, the grandfather of Maheśvara, the author of *Viśvaprakāśanighaṇṭu* and *Sāhasāṅkacaritra*.

Prof. Wilson[9] thinks that "*Sāhasāṅka* may be a title of Śrī Candradeva, who founded the ruling dynasty of Kanauj about the end of the 11th cent., which he acquired by his own strength."

Aufrecht says that the work either praises Bhojarāja or Vikramārka. Vidyāpati in his *Puruṣaparīkṣā* calls Vikramāditya as *Sāhasāṅka*.

Of all these views, the view of Vidyādhara may be considered as probable in view of the fact that he is the oldest authority on the subject.

(7) Śivaśaktisiddhi

This work, which is mentioned in the *Nc* XVIII. 154 is also read as *Śivabhaktisiddhi*. The oldest Ms, however, reads the first title.

It seems to be the work of *Tantraśāstra* describing Śiva and Śakti, as is evident from the *Nc* XIV. 98 as well as the *maṅgala* stanza of the *Khaṇḍana*, where, the poet's devotion for the *Ardhanārīśvara* form of Lord Śiva is clearly visible.

(8) Sthairyavicāraṇaprakaraṇa

This is mentioned in the *Nc* IV. 123. It seems to be "a disquisition on philosophy", and according to Nārāyaṇa and other commentators, it is a work establishing the non-transitory character of the world by refuting the *kṣaṇabhaṅga* theory of the Buddhist philosophers, according to whom everything is transitory.

(9) Vijayapraśasti

It is described as *Śrīvijayapraśasti* in the *Nc* V. 138. Dr. Bhandarkar in his Report (1907), says that in an old catalogue of the Jasalmere Bhandar, a poem named *Vijayapraśasti*, is referred to. But it is not found in the published catalogue (*GOS* XXI). It is difficult to say who this king Vijaya was. The commentator Bhavadeva (and not Gopinātha as believed by some)[10] identifies

him with Vijayasena of Bengal. The commentator Śrīvatsa, on the other hand, identifies him with Vijayacandra and remarks that the word Śrī is prefixed to the work either because the king was then alive or out of the poet's respect for the king.

Shri R.P. Chanda identifies him "with Vijayapāla" of the Pratihāra dynasty of Kanauj, an inscription of whose time is dated in A.D. 960 and whose successor Rājyapāla was a contemporary of Sultan Muhammad of Gajni."

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar is, however, of the opinion that "Vijaya of his (i.e. Śrīharṣa's) *Vijayapraśasti* can thus be no other than Jayacandra's father Vijayacandra (A.D. 1155-59)" and is followed by Krishnamachariar (p. 181) and Pt. Shivadatta (p. 9). The line *prakhyātakīrtikavivarṇitavaibhavāni*, which qualifies the glories (*yaśāmsi*) of Vijayacandra, also corroborates this view.

Dr. De, however, rightly remarks about all these works that "We know nothing about the nature and content of these works and all historical speculations based upon them are idle."[11]

II. WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO ŚRĪHARṢA

(1) Amarakhaṇḍanam

It is a work which criticises the *Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana*, popularly known as *Amarakośa* – the well-known lexicon of Amarasiṃha and which in its turn is refuted by Kṛṣṇasūri in his *Amaramandana*. This work which is not recorded by Aufrecht, is recorded by Dr. Raghavan. Fortunately, it is printed by Dr. T.R. Chintamani, as found by him in two palm-leaf Mss, in Telugu script. It is attributed to Śrīharṣa on the authority of the concluding stanza. Dr. Chintamani, who could not identify him exactly, remarks : "It seems certain that he is not identical either with the author of the *Ratnāvali*, etc. or with the author of the *Naiṣadha* and other works. The present author quotes from recent writers and hence the conclusion stated above." Dr. Raghavan, however, gives us good information about this Śrīharṣa, (A.D. 1770) – a late writer of the Telugu country – who was one of the pupils of Sujanabhaṭṭa, who in his turn was one of the pupils of Divākarabhaṭṭa and whose son was Kesaribhaṭṭa. Kallolabhaṭṭa, the son of Kesaribhaṭṭa, informs us that this Śrīharṣa wrote a 'Naiṣadha kāvya' also. It is clear from this that this later Telugu writer not

only adopted the name of the author of the *Nc* but also really vied with him.

Thus, the claim of *Amarakhaṇḍanam* to be the work of our poet, is set aside.

(2) Dvirūpakośa

Dvirūpakośa is a lexicon collecting words having two different forms, e.g. *agāra*, and *āgāra*, differing in forms, but having the same meaning, viz. a house. Collection of words having three different forms is called *Trirūpakośa*. It seems that many attempts were made to compile such lexicons as there are four *Dvirūpakośas* known to us attributed to Bharata , Mallika, Maheśvara Puruṣottamadeva and Śrīharṣa.

The author says, in the beginning, that he wrote this work to delight those who are not adept in grammar and to earn the favour of poets. He also professes to have consulted the different forms of words as found in other works. In the colophon, the authorship is claimed for Śrīharṣa, who is described as the son of Hīra and as the author of the *Naiṣadha mahākāvya*. This makes it clear that the author is our poet and that the work was composed after the *Nc*.

The work is recorded, in a colophon of a Ms as *Durghaṭanighaṇṭu*. "It need not be supposed that the author is one Durghaṭa. This text of this *Dvirūpakośa* or lexicon of doublets is the same as that ascribed to Śrīharṣa in the next number. The author, therefore, is Śrīharṣa."[12]

Burnell, however, remarks that it is "almost identical with the last section of Maheśvara's *Viśvaprakāśa*, viz. *Śabdabhedaprakāśa*.[13]

(3) Jānakīgītā

A work of this name is ascribed to Śrīharṣa by Krishnamachariar. Nothing can be said, at present, on this work, except that it is a devotional poem according to Aufrecht.

(4) Pañcanalīyakāvya

This is mentioned among the works of Śrīharṣa by Dr. Dasgupta most probably on the authority of Aufrecht.

But this is not really an independent work of Śrīharṣa; it is

the 13th canto of the *Nc* that generally passes under this name, as it deals with the paronomastic description, by Sarasvatī, of the five Nalas – one real Nala and the four gods appearing in the form of Nala – and which, as it represents Śrīharṣa at his best in the art of *double entendre*, is very popular among the Sanskrit paṇḍits.

(5) *Śabdabhedanirdeśa*

Śabdabhedanirdeśa or *Śabdabhedaprakāśa* as it is otherwise called, seems to be another name of *Dvirūpakośa* mentioned above. This is corroborated by the stanzas, which are almost identical with those of *Dvirūpakośa*. P.P.S. Shastri, however, remarks that "The work is attributed to Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita in the Madras Govt. Oriental Mss Library, Descriptive Catalogue Vol. III. No. 1747."

(6) *Śleṣārthapadasaṅgraha*

Śleṣārthapadasaṅgraha is a classified dictionary of homonyms and words which have different meaning according to gender. It is recorded by Aufrecht who attributes it to Śrīharṣa on the authority of Burnell.

In the beginning, the author pays respects to Rāma, Sītā and Gaṇeśa respectively. In the next stanza are given the names of the work and its author 'Śrīharṣa Kavi', who admits his indebtedness to other lexicons. The work proper begins with the fourth stanza, which gives different meanings of the word *Bramha.* The last stanza discusses the different meanings of the word *kapila* and *kadru*, while the colophon again refers to the author as *Kavirāja* Śrīharṣa and gives the name of the work which is spoken of as having one chapter.

Probably, this work cannot be claimed for our poet as the devotion of the author of the present work to Rāma and Sītā is in contrast with that of the *Nc*, whose devotion for the Lord Śiva is clearly visible in his two extant works.

(7) *Suprabhātastotra*

The *Suprabhātastotra* is a hymn in praise of Buddha as the Illuminator. It has twenty-four stanzas principally in the *mālinī* metre and bears Harṣa's name in the colophon, as informed by Jackson. Thomas ascribes this work to our poet, but it is claimed

by Jackson for Harṣavardhana, the patron of Bāṇa (7th cent.) and the author of the well-known dramas *Ratnāvalī, Priyadarśikā* and *Nāgānanda,* on the ground that it harmonises "with the king's later Buddhistic tendencies."[14]

(8) *Vāṇīvilāsa*

The *Vāṇīvilāsa* which is not recorded by Aufrecht, is a lexicon of doublets; the epilogue stanza attributes it to Śrīharṣa the son of Hīra, in the manner of the epilogue stanzas to the *Nc.*

The work is important as the author has consulted, as he admits in the beginning, many lexicons – some of which are quite old works, while others yet unknown – such as Amara, *Bā* haṭa (= Vāgbhaṭa) Viśva, Vaijayanti, Śāśvata, Halāyudha, Keśava, Yādava, Manmatha, Śabdārṇava and Kāmandaka, etc. which are mentioned in the end.

There is no sufficient evidence, however, to attribute it to our poet, even though the epilogue stanza, which is an imitation of that of the *Nc,* claims it for him.

We stop here with a wish that the works of Śrīharṣa which have not come down to us, may be restored to us some day.

FOOTNOTES

1. *CC.I,* P. 31.
2. *IA* XLII, P. 84; A panegyric describing the defeat of Arṇarāja by Kumārapāla is referred to by Dr. Krishnamachariar (P. 181, n. 7).
3. *Nc* (Jani), App. 12, St. 3, P. 48
4. *IA,* XLII, P. 83
5. *IA.* II, Pp. 240-41.
6. *Indian Culture,* P. 578.
7. Radhakrishnan S.; *HIP* II, P. 451, n.1; Vide also Dasgupta S.N., *HIP* II, Pp. 125-133.
8. *IA,* III, P. 30.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Vide Ch. II, f.n. 5.
11. *HSL,* P 326, n.3.
12. Sastri P.P.S., Tanjore IX, P 3766.
13. Burnell, P. 51 (No. 10464)
14. *Priyadarśikā,* P. xlv.

Chapter Four

Date

"There is not a single date in Sanskrit chronology which is not, or has not been, disputed."[1] The statement is quite true in case of Śrīharṣa, whose date was freely discussed, once, in the volumes of *Indian Antiquary*, by eminent scholars.

Dr. G. Bühler

It was Dr. Bühler, who for the first time tried to fix the date of Śrīharṣa, on the strength of the account of Śrīharṣa as given by Rājaśekhara. He came to the following conclusion :–

Śrīharṣa was a protége of king Jayantacandra (Jayacandra). This Jayantacandra must have ascended the throne between A.D. 1163 and A.D. 1177, as the last inscription of his father (Vijayacandra) is dated in the former year and the first of his own grants in the latter year. Again, according to Rājaśekhara, he was a contemporary of Kumārapāla (A.D. 1143-1174). Thus Jayacandra ruled over Banaras between A.D. 1163 and 1194 (the year in which he was dethroned by the Muslims). Thus "the *Naiṣadhīya*", concludes Dr. Buhler, "must have been written between A.D. 1163 and 1174 i.e. between the earliest date on which Jayacandra's accession to the throne may be placed, and Kumārapāla's death."[2] Thus the date of the composition of the *Naiṣadha* and hence the date of its author is the latter half of the 12th century A.D.

Justice K.T. Telang

But this date was challenged by Justice K.T. Telang,[3] who did not accept the account of Rājaśekhara as authentic, on the ground that it "is in many details obviously fanciful". He advances the following arguments :–

1. The *Naiṣadhīya* is quoted in *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*, (beginning of the 11th century).

2. Mādhavācārya's *Śaṅkaravijaya* (XV. 72, 141, 157) mentions Bāṇa, Mayūra, Udayana, and Khaṇḍanakāra poet Śrīharṣa as philosophers vanquished by Śaṅkarācārya. The account of Mādhavācārya (before the middle of the 14th century A.D.) is earlier than that of Rājaśekhara (middle of the 14th century A.D.) in point of time and hence should be more reliable than that of the latter.

3. Vācaspatimiśra (11th century) wrote a refutation of the *Khaṇḍana*.

He then comes to the following conclusion : "These facts indicate a period which is about two centuries earlier than the period to which the *Harṣaprabandha* assigns the subject of its narrative."[4]

Thus according to Justice Telang the date of Śrīharṣa is 9th or 10th century A.D.

F. S. Growse

In the same year, Mr. F.S. Growse pointed out that the Hindu bard Chanda (end of the 12th century), regarded the *Naiṣadha* as a poem of considerable antiquity. His conclusion was based on the fact that Chanda's work mentions, in the beginning, eminent writers and his predecessors. The persons mentioned are (1) Śeṣa-nāga, (2) Viṣṇu, (3) Vyāsa, (4) Śukadeva, (5) Śrīharṣa, (6) Kālidāsa, (7) Daṇḍamāli; and (8) Jayadeva. He believed that the names "are evidently arranged in what is intended to be chronological order."[5] Thus Growse supported Justice Telang.

R. D. Sen

But this view of Mr. Growse, was challenged by Shri Ram Das Sen, "who pointed out the flaws in the poem of Chanda viz. Prithvīrāja Rāso and concluded that there is no chronological order intended by the poet.

P. N. Purnaiya

Next comes Shri P.N. Purnaiya with new arguments based on the textual study. He mentions those works of Śrīharṣa, the names of which are given in the epilogues of the *Nc* and identifies the *Sāhasāṅka* of Śrīharṣa's *Navasāhasāṅkacarita*, with Candradeva, the sovereign of Gādhipura (i.e. Kanauj) whose era of rule was "the early part of the 11th century, if not the latter extremity of the 10th."[7]

Thus he puts Śrīharṣa in the last quarter of the 10th cent. or at the most in the middle of the 11th century.

R.P. Chanda

Shri R.P. Chanda proceeds further on this line and identifies the Gauḍa king of the *Gauḍorvīśakulapraśasti*, with Mahipala-I; the Chinda king of the *Chindapraśasti* with the king Lalla of the Chinda family and the *Sāhasāṅka* of the *Navasāhasāṅkacarita* with the king Sindhurāja of Malwa and concludes that "Śrīharṣa, like Bilhaṇa in the 11th cent. must have been a wandering paṇḍit in the beginning of his career and visited the courts of Sindhurāja, Lalla and Mahipāla I, and tried to win their favours by dedicating *praśastis* to them, before he secured the patronage of the king of Kanauj."[8]

D.R. Bhandarkar

Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar, in his editorial note on the above article, however, remarks : "I am afraid, Śrīharṣa cannot be placed so early as the close of the 10th cent., as Mr. Ram Prasad Chanda contends. I agree with Bühler in accepting the statement of Rājaśekhara, the author of the *Prabandhakośa*, that Śrīharṣa wrote the *Naiṣadhīyacarita* at the bidding of Jayantacandra, who can be no other than the Gahadavāla king Jayacandra (A.D. 1172-87)."[9] He gives different conjectures about the kings of Śrīharṣa's works.

Thus the different dates given by different scholars can be summarised as under :–

Scholars		Date
Justice K.T. Telang Mr. F.S. Growse Shri R.P. Chanda	}	9th or 10th century A.D.
Shri P.N. Purnaiya	:	Middle of the 11th century.
Dr. G. Bühler Shri R.D. Sen Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar	}	Latter half of the 12th century.

Dr. G. Bühler

This controversy was brought to an end by Dr. Bühler, by answering the following objections put forth by his opponents.

The objections :–

1. Śrīharṣa is quoted in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* (First half of the 11th century).

2. Vācaspati Miśra (11th cent.) refuted the *Khaṇḍana*.

3. Śrīharṣa was a contemporary of Śaṅkarācārya according to Mādhava's *Śaṅkaravijaya*.

4. Chanda (12th cent.) placed Śrīharṣa before Kālidāsa.

Dr. Bühler's reply

1. An examination of *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* shows that there is no quotation from the *Nc* in that work. An index prepared by Śrī Vāmanācarya, his Śāstri, as well as a list of the authors and works quoted in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* by Dr. Aufrecht settled this dispute for ever.

2. This Vācaspati is a later Vācaspati and not his earlier namesake (of the 11th cent.). His *Khaṇḍanoddhāra* is not included in the list of books of the ancient Vācaspati.

3. Mādhava's work is devoid of all historical value. "It is nothing but a mass of legends heaped, one upon the other, for the glorification of the great master. To give only one instance of its inaccuracies, Śaṅkara is made to refute Bāṇa and Mayūra, the two well-known poets of the 7th century, and besides the *khaṇḍanakartā*, his predecessor Udayanācārya. The testimony of such a work ought never to be invoked in chronological questions."[10]

4. This point was rebutted by Justice Telang. Moreover Chanda was not the real author of *Prithvīrāja Rāso*. According to Kavirāja Murardhan, the work belongs to the 14th cent. at the earliest. There is thus nothing wrong if the work refers to Śrīharṣa as a poet of bygone ages, as concluded by Justice Telang.

Dr. Bühler also adduced the evidence from the commentary of Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita (composed in Saṁvat 1353=A.D. 1297) who speaks of a commentary by his predecessor Vidyādhara and who calls the *Naiṣadhīya*, a *navaṁ kāvyam*, 'recent poem', which, therefore, cannot be put too early as Justice Telang and others think. He thus puts him in the 'second half of the 12th century.'

But the date of Śrīharṣa can be pushed back by a quarter of a century, on the authority of the evidence supplied by his philosophical work viz. the *Khaṇḍana*, which quotes and refutes,

in many places, the arguments of Udayana, the author of the *Lakṣaṇāvalī*. composed in Śaka 906= A.D. 984 The same work refers to Mahimabhaṭṭa (A.D. 1020-1060) and his *Vyaktiviveka*.[11] Śrīharṣa, therefore, cannot be earlier than A.D. 1020. Thus the attempts of the scholars, referred to above, to place Śrīharṣa earlier, are dismissed, on the internal evidence supplied by the *Khaṇḍana*.

Fortunately, we are able to fix the lower limit also, as the *Nc* is quoted, for the first time, by Mahendrasūri, a pupil of Jain polymath Hemacandrācārya (A.D. 1088-1172) in his commentary called *Anekārtha-kairavākarakaumudī*, on his preceptor's *Anekārthasaṅgraha*.[12] This commentary was written immediately after the death of Hemacandrācārya. Thus this proves that the *Nc* had become popular about A.D. 1180 (approximate year of the composition of Mahendra's work). The date of the composition of the *Nc*, therefore, can be given as A.D. 1175 if not earlier.

Hence the date of Śrīharṣa falls between A.D. 1020-1180, and his literary career may fall between 1125 to 1180, as his *Khaṇḍana* is refuted by Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya (A.D. 1200) in his *Tattvacintāmaṇi*.

Prof. S.P. Bhattacharya, in his learned article on 'The probable date of the *naiṣadhacarita*',[13] narrows down this period further, with the following words : "it would thus appear that Śrīharṣa's *Kh. Kh.* (= *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*) must not be later than 1170 A.C. and that Śrīharṣa's period of literary activity must fall between 1130-1170 A.C. If the *N.C.* (= *Nc* was separated by a fair interval from the *Kh. Kh.* [n. 26: This disposes off the view that both the *N.C.* and *Kh. Kh.* were contemporaneous as the verse at the end of the 6th canto describing the epic as *sahaja* has been taken to suggest. That the word *sahaja* has not been used in its restricted sense is evident from the poet's reference to the closing portion of the *N.C.* in the beginning of the *Kh. Kh.* P. 119], as in all probability it could not but have been, the latter being a mature work, it would very likely be earlier than 1150 A.C."[14]

Finally he places the *Nc* "before the middle of the 12th century, at least a decade prior to it."[15]

FOOTNOTES

1. F.S. Growse; *IA*, II, P. 306.
2. Bühler G.; *JBBRAS* X (1871), P. 37.
3. *IA* II (1873), Pp. 70-74.
4. *Ibid.* P. 74.
5. *IA*, II, P. 213.
6. *IA*, II, Pp. 240-41.
7. *IA*, III (1874), Pp. 29-30.
8. *IA*, XLII (1913), P 83.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Bühler; *op.cit.*, P. 283.
11. Vide : *Khaṇḍana* (Dravid edn.), P. 1327.
12. Jani, A.N., "Mahendrasūri dvārā naishadhīyacaritano sarvaprathama ullekha" (Guj.), *Jainayuga*, April, 1959, Pp. 30-32.
13. *Oriental Thought*, Vol.I, No. 4, July 1955, Pp. 58-73.
14. *Ibid.* P. 72.
15. *Ibid.* P. 73.

Chapter Five

Erudition

Śrīharṣa was a product of an age of learning in which the scholars and poets used to vie with one another to show their superiority over their rivals. Some profound paṇḍits used to visit different parts of the country to conquer rival paṇḍits in the court of other kings. The victorious paṇḍits collected from the patron king a certificate of their victory over their rival paṇḍit. Such a certificate was called a *jayapatra*. In order to surpass the rivals, the paṇḍits sometimes even resorted to the supernatural powers and there are many references to the propitiation of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning for such powers. The *Nc* itself is an outcome of such a *cintāmaṇi mantra* (I. 145), the efficacy of which is extolled in XIV- 88-92. Amaracandra Sūri and Harihara (12th cent.) are described as *siddha-sārasvata* scholars by Rājaśekhara. Bālacandra (13th cent.) also received such *sārasvata mantra* from Udayasūri. In this age scholarship was more honoured than poetry, which occupied secondary position. Somadeva (10th cent.) in his *Yaśastilakacampū* says that his poetry was merely a by-product of his philosophical studies. Śrīharṣa was also primarily a scholar and wrote the *Nc* as a by-product of his scholarship to prove that he is not a mere dry dialectician but also a connoisseur of poetry. The *Nc* was written by him to silence his detractors by exhibiting his poetic genius.

Śrīharṣa's erudition is reflected in many places in the *Nc*. Some most important philosophical allusions are pointed out here below.

Sāṅkhya Doctrines

The *satkāryavāda* of the Sāṅkhyas, according to which the effect already exists in the cause is referred to in V. 94.

Vaiśeṣika Theory

According to the Vaiśeṣika philosophers, the world is created

from atoms – the smallest unit. When two such atoms unite they produce a larger unit called *dvyaṇuka* (binary); when three such binaries unite they give rise to one *tryaṇuka* or *trasareṇu* (tertiary); in this manner the gross earth, gross water etc. are produced. This theory is referred to in III. 125.

Next important reference is to the Vaiśeṣika theory of Darkness in XXII. 35. According to the Kaṇādasūtras, darkness is non-existence (*abhāva*), because it is different in origin from substance, quality and action, and is occasioned simply by the obstruction of light by some other substance. Thus, according to the Vaiśeṣikas, darkness is not a substance, as is the case with the Mīmāmsakas (Kumārila School), but merely the absence of light.

According to tradition, the Vaiśeṣika system was revealed to Kaṇāda by the Lord Śiva in the form of an owl (*ulūka*) and hence it is called *aulūkadarśana*. An owl can see only in the darkness and hence Śrīharṣa says in this stanza that it is only the *aulūkadarśana* that can well determine the true nature of darkness.

Nyāya Concept of Mokṣa

But an important reference to the Nyāya philosophy is found in XVII. 75, wherein their conception of *mokṣa* is criticised. According to this school, salvation is absolute cessation of pain, which is regarded as having twenty-one forms covering the whole range of human experience, including knowledge and pleasure. Thus it is a colourless condition devoid of all attributes and hence it is described here as a state resembling that of a stone; and the propounder of this system is called punningly Gotama (a bull *par excellence*). The Vedantist Śrīharṣa, in this manner, takes an opportunity of ridiculing the Nyāya conception of *mokṣa*, which ran counter to the Vedanta theory that emancipation is eternal bliss.

Mīmāṃsā Doctrines

According to the Mīmāṃsā school, gods have no existence apart from the *mantras* with which they are invoked. Again they have no corporeal form, because they are never visible. This theory is referred to by our poet in V. 39 and XIV. 73.

This theory of the Mīmāṃsakas has been attacked by both

Śaṅkarācārya and Rāmānujācārya who favour the traditional view that gods have a corporeal existence.

The Mīmāṃsā theory of the self-validity of knowledge (*Svataḥprāmāṇya*) is also referred to in II. 61.

According to the Mīmāṃsakas the validity of cognitions is inherent in them, and they are, therefore, able to bring about the apprehension of an object without depending upon any other source of knowledge. If the apprehension of an object must be deferred until the validity of the source of the cognition is ascertained, there will be *anavasthā* (series of cognitions *ad infinitum*). Hence they believe in the authoritative character of the cognising faculty (*buddhi*) and maintain that a cognition that has definitely taken place does not require corroboration by other cognitions, and should be regarded as authoritative or self-evident.

The atheism of the Mīmāṃsakas is also mentioned in II.64, where their system is described as rejecting the Lord Śiva (i.e. the Supreme Being), though He is glorified by all the Vedas, and exerts himself for the sake of others without any interest of his own.

Vedānta Doctrines

An elaborate description of the devotion of the *Upaniṣad* to the Absolute is found in XI. 129. The philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* is described as devoting itself to the One Being, beyond the range of speech, an ocean of consciousness, an infinite joy, by rejecting air and earthly objects, watery objects and light, the sky, time, space and the mind.

But the most interesting reference to the Vedānta doctrine is to be found in XIII. 36. When Damayantī is unable to distinguish the real Nala from the four psuedo-Nalas, the poet says – "Just as in the presence of a diversity of doctrines people do not believe in the truth of monism, the fifth alternative, though truer; four other theories, wishing to win this (faith), being engaged in preventing such a belief (in monism) from gaining ground. Similarly, Damayantī, in the face of this doubt about Nala, did not believe in the reality of the fifth alternative (real Nala) though more genuine than the rest, four other persons (Indra, etc.) desirous of winning her, having prevented her from acquiring such a trust."[1]

Buddhist Doctrine

Buddhist doctrines are referred to in several places. In one place Srīharṣa speaks of *sūnyātmatāvāda, vijñānasāmastya* and *sakāratāsiddhi.*

An important reference to the Buddhist goddess Tārā is found in our text at XXIL. 134. The poet speaks of a custom of making a circle of camphor mixed with musk in the shrine of the goddess. He alludes to a story, as given in the Bauddha works on philosophy, that Brahmā performed the rite, mentioned above and became the supreme amongst the gods.

Jain Doctrine

The three jewels (*ratnatraya*) are referred to in IX. 71. They are – *samyagdarśana, samyagjñāna* and *samyakcāritra.*

Cārvāka Doctrines

A popular exposition of the Cārvāka philosophy is found in XVII. 36-83.

The school attacks the views of other systems as far as metaphysics and ethics are concerned. It also attacks *śṛti, smṛti,* ritual, *purāṇas,* and so on.

It condemns ethical rules and advocates sexual pleasure and supports its view by the stories of Vyāsa, etc. and speaks of absurdity of female control.

The Cārvākas being gross materialists, do not believe in the existence of a soul and rebirth and argue that a creature once burnt to ashes, after death, can by no means return. This is the doctrine of *ucchedavāda* (annihilation) which is referred to in works like Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* (*mahābodhijātaka*). Having no vision of the life beyond, the Cārvākas devote themselves to the world and its delights. Sensual pleasure, is their *summum bonum.* The Cārvāka in our poem requisitions even the aid of grammar in support of his doctrines; he quotes and misinterprets a rule from Pāṇini to prove that liberation is the privilege of the impotent.

Mythological Allusions

The *Nc* is full of allusions to mythological stories occurring in the epics and *purāṇas.*

The story of Agastya's birth, his making the Vindhya mountain horizontal and his drinking up of ocean are alluded to in XIX. 62, V. 130 and in IX. 57 respectively.

The story of the chopping of the head of the sacrifice by Śiva and its replacement by the Aśvins is referred to in IV. 67.

The story of incarnation of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma is alluded to in XXI. 84. The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* tells that in order to save the earth from the oppression of demons, Viṣṇu, the primeval Man plucked from his head two hairs, one white and the other black and ordained that the two mysterious hairs should incarnate on the earth as Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa respectively.

Brahma's being enamoured at his own daughter when He was made a target of his arrows by Kāmadeva and subsequent humiliation of former by the latter is referred to in VIII. 20.

Garuḍa once devoured a low-caste man, but when he felt a burning sensation in his throat he gave him up, knowing by that means that his victim was not a low-caste man but a *brahmin*. This myth is alluded to in IV. 71.

Meghanāda (also called Indrajit) the son of Rāvaṇa, in order to deceive Rāma caught mock Sītā by hair and cut off her head. On seeing this cruel act, the monkey Kumuda swooned, Nala closed his eyes and Sugrīva grew pale. This *Rāmāyaṇa* story is availed of in XIX. 8.

During the universal deluge, the sage Mārkaṇḍeya entered into Viṣṇu's belly and beheld there the whole universe just as it had been outside. This myth is found in the *Nc.* II.91 and XXI. 108.

Śaṅkha and Likhita were two brothers. Once Śaṅkha stole a fruit from his brother's orchard. He soon realised his sin of theft and pressed his brother to punish him. Likhita presented his brother before the king for punishment. But the king refused to punish him as he was a *brahmin*. Likhita thereupon commanded Śaṅkha to cut off his hands, and Śaṅkha did so immediately. This myth is made use of in XIX. 56.

Many myths about Śiva are also pressed into service in the poem. His drinking of poison and his chasing sacrifice running away in the form of a deer are referred to in XVI. 30 and XXII. 78 respectively.

His appearing in the form of a luminous *liṅga* before Brahmā and Viṣṇu; and subsequent curse to Surabhi and Ketaki for playing

foul witness are referred to in I. 78 and X. 52. The famous legend of Triśaṅku is made use of in XVII. III.

Viṣṇu's myths during Vāmana incarnation such as traversing the whole sky with a single foot and subduing Bali are found in I. 70, V. 130 etc.

Viṣṇu's offering his own eye during Śiva's worship is mentioned in XIX. 58. His different incarnations and myths connected therewith are found in XXI. 55-92. Kṛṣṇa's bringing *pārijāta* tree from heaven occurs in X.24.

These are a few references showing Śrīharṣa's familiarity with the mythological studies from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *purāṇas.*

Apart from these mythological reference the *Nc* is replete with references to the *Vedas, Vedāṅgas,* astronomy, astrology, palmistry, *āyurveda, dhanurveda, arthaśāstra, kāmaśāstra, tantraśāstra, saṅgītaśāstra, aśvaśāstra, ratnaśāstra* etc.

All this is sufficient to show the scholastic genius of Śrīharṣa which covered all the branches of learning prevalent in his times.

He says about Nala that the learning was an actress dancing on the tip of his tongue.[2] The same remark is equally applicable to Śrīharṣa also.[3]

FOOTNOTES

1. Translation from Handiqui : *The Nc of Śrīharṣa*, Poona, 1956, P. 201.
2. *Amuṣya vidyā rasanāgranartakī* (*Nc* I. 5).
3. For details vide : *Nc* (Jani), Chs. 10-12.

Chapter Six

Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ – Summary

The word *Naiṣadhīya* means 'of *Naiṣadha*', the word *Naiṣadha* means the king of Niṣadha country. Thus the title Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ (= *Nc*) means the biography of the king of the Niṣadha country i.e. Nala. The poem thus gives a biography of king Nala.

The story of Nala and Damayantī is one of the most popular stories of India. It has attracted many poets and dramatists, who have enriched the Sanskrit literature by frequently drawing upon it. More than sixty works (dramas, poems and a *campūs*)[1] based on this story in Sanskrit language alone bespeak its popularity. The reason for its popularity lies possibly in a tradition which has accorded to it a religious sanctity by declaring that its recitation destroys sin and ill-luck.[2]

The story of Nala, called *Nalopākhyāna* occurs in the *Mahābhārata*, the *purāṇas* and in the folk-lore literature such as the *Kathāsaritsāgara* etc. Its Jain version appears in the *Kumārapālapratibodha* and many other Jain works,

Śrīharṣa has followed the story of the *Mahābhārata* in spite of certain deviations, elaborations and additions necessary to cast the simple matter-of-fact narrative into the mould of an ornate poem.

Summary of the Poem

The poem deals only with earlier part of the life of Nala i.e. up to his marriage with Damayantī and his dalliance with her. It is divided into 22 cantos.

Canto 1 – The poem opens directly with the description of Nala's greatness, prowess and physical beauty by which the damsels of all the three worlds including Damayantī are attracted towards him. Nala is also attracted towards her on hearing about her matchless beauty and unparallelled feminine qualities. To hide his

love-sickness he goes to his park, where he captures a golden swan which implores the king to relieve it. The pitious king leaves the bird free.

The pitious love-born condition of Nala is effectively described. The pathos delineated in the mourning of the swan is also very touching.

Canto 2 – The freed bird returns to the hand of Nala, describes the beauty of Damayantī and promises Nala that it will describe him before her in such a way that his image will not be ousted from her heart even by the Lord of Gods. The bird leaves, with the consent of Nala, for Kuṇḍinapura, the capital of Damayantī's father Bhīma.

The poet is eloquent in describing the alluring physical beauty of Damayantī. The diplomacy of the swan is also noteworthy.

Canto 3 – The bird alights on the ground near Damayantī and describes the beauty and virtues of Nala before her. Damayantī confides in it and confesses her love for Nala and entreats the bird to unite her with him. The bird returns to Nala and conveys him the success of his mission.

Here the clever bird describes the physical charm and covetable traits of the hero before the heroine so cleverly that the image of Nala is firmly implanted in the heart of the heroine as promised by the swan to Nala.

Canto 4 – The entire canto is devoted to describe the love-lorn condition of Damayantī, who unable to bear further the pangs of separation, falls unconscious. On hearing the cries of her friends, her father comes to the scene, gauges the situation and declares that he will soon arrange for the *svayaṃvara* of Damayantī.

The pangs of Damayantī are very pathetically described in detail. Poet's skill in delineating *vipralambha* eros is evident here.

Canto 5 – Nārada informs Indra about the *svayaṃvara* of Damayantī, the description of whose maddening beauty by the sage makes Indra, Agni, Yama and Varuṇa love-sick for her. They start earthward to get her hand. On the way they meet Nala, whom crafty Indra binds with a promise to be their envoy and request Damayantī to select one of them. Nala puts forth an excuse of his inability to enter the fully-guarded harem. Indra then grants him

power of remaining invisible as long as he wishes.

The description of love-lorn condition of even gods nicely suggests maddening charms and qualities of the heroine.

Canto 6 – Nala enters the harem. His romantic experiences by dashing against girls of harem are vividly described. He hears the messages of go-betweens of four gods, conveyed to Damayantī and is pleased to hear their rejection by her.

Here we find a nice picture of humorous and wonderful experiences of Nala moving invisible in the harem. The temptations and threats of gods trying to win love of Damayantī through the female messenger are aptly put forth.

Canto 7 – Nala observes Damayantī closely and describes her from top to toe.

The poet becomes very eloquent in this canto. Following the rules of *mahākāvya* he dedicates the entire canto for describing different parts of Damayantī's beautiful body. Such a detailed description of feminine beauty is not found elsewhere.

Canto 8 – Nala becomes visible. Being asked by Damayantī he introduces himself as a messenger of gods and entreats her to select one of them as her husband.

Here Nala's character as an ideal messenger is effectively delineated.

Canto 9 –The entire canto is devoted to a capturing dialogue between Nala and Damayantī. Nala is shown at his best in being loyal to his mission. Desparate Damayantī pours forth her grief in melancholy strains of the deepest despair. Nala unable to bear the plight of Damayantī discloses unconsciously his identity but repents his blunder. Suddenly the swan appears and advises Nala not to trouble Damayantī any more.

Here the poet has very successfully brought out the clash between personal love and duty on the part of Nala.

Cantos 10 to 12 – are devoted to the description of *svayaṃvara* in which persons from the three worlds are present. Bhīmasena receives them and offers them seats according to their status. Nala sees Gods impersonating his form. Bhīmasena, not finding any one capable of introducing the suitors, invokes Sarasvatī, who introduces to Damayantī Gods, semi-gods, serpent-kings and many mortal kings, one after the other.

These three cantos highly speak of poet's art of elaboration.

The detailed description of suitor kings is unique in the field of Sanskrit poetic literature.

Canto 13 – Damayantī is finally brought before Nala. But she is perplexed to see five Nalas instead of one. Sarasvatī in order not to invite wrath of Gods, extols them one by one in such a way that the same stanza may yield by *double entendre*, two meanings one referring to a particular God and the other to Nala. While introducing Nala also she resorts to the same trick. Srīharṣa's command over the language reaches its zenith in a verse (13.34) which by the force of paronomasia yields five meanings applied to Nala and four gods individually.

Poet's command over Sanskrit language reaches its climax in this canto.

Canto 14 – Damayantī at her wit's end to identify Nala propitiates Gods. By the power granted by them she grasps the meaning of the verse yielding five meanings, identifies Nala and garlands him. Gods now appear in their real form and confer boons upon Nala and Damayantī and retire to heaven.

Cantos 15 to 16 – are devoted to the description of decoration of the bride and the bridegroom for marriage ceremony, the procession of Nala, the marriage rituals, the marriage party, the farewell of the bride and the entry of the newly wed couple in the city and then in the palace of Nala.

The description of marriage ceremony and customs – especially the erotic jokes and mockery of female attendants at the marriage banquet are very graphic.

Canto 17 – is devoted to the description of Kali – a belated suitor of Damayantī, who on hearing from Gods about Damayantī's selecting Naḷa declares his stern resolution to ruin Nala by snatching away both Damayantī and the kingdom from him. He enters the capital of Nala and resides on a *bibhītaka* tree seeking an opportunity to possess Nala.

The powerful presentation of Cārvāka's philosophy of materialism seems undefatigable. His stern resolution however remains unfulfilled in the poem.

Canto 18 – is devoted to the descriptions of Nala's amorous dalliance with Damayantī in which the poet ransacks the whole Kāmaśāstra.

The poet here surpasses Kālidāsa's description of Śiva-

Pārvatī's amorous sports presented in the *Kumārasaṃbhava*.

Canto 19 and 20 – describe the day-break and the amorous jokes and funs of the couple.

Canto 21 – presents Nala's daily programme such as bath, worship of Gods and evening adorations.

Canto 22 – The poem ends with a beautiful and poetic description of evening and the rising moon.

The most enchanting description of moon-rise is unique.

FOOTNOTES

1. Vide *Nc* (Jani), App. 3.
2. *Kārkoṭakasya nāgasya Damayantyā Nalasya ca /*
   Ṛtuparṇasya rājarṣeḥ kīrtanam kalināśanam // (*Mbh.* III. 79-11)
   – Krishnamachariar ; *HSL*, P. 184, n.2.

Chapter Seven

Sources and Innovations

Śrīharṣa has taken the story for his poem from the *Nalopākhyāna* of the *Mahābhārata* as seen earlier. But in order to cast the simple story of the *Mahābhārata* into an ornate poem Śrīharṣa had to make many changes and elaborations.

Following are some of the important changes introduced by the poet :

(1) In the *Mabābhārata* Nala sees the swan in the garden, but Śrīharṣa gives a specific location, viz. a lake in the garden where the swan is seen by Nala.

(2) In the *Mahābhārata* Nala releases the swan only after securing a promise of going to Damayantī with Nala's mission. In the *Nc* the bird is released unconditionally by Nala who is moved by its pathetic lamentations. The bird undertakes the work only out of his high regard for the king whose kindness it wants to repay.

(3) The *Mahābhārata* informs us that many swans flew to Kuṇḍinapura and alighted near Damayantī and her companions who pursued them each running after one. Śrīharṣa, on the other hand, sees propriety in sending one swan only.

(4) Damayantī's love-sickness is conveyed to her father by her female friends in the *Mahābhārata*, while Śrīharṣa renders it more effective by introducing Bhīmasena who appears on the scene on hearing the cries of confusion of Damayantī's friends who are trying to restore her to senses from swoon.

(5) The gods Agni etc, are described in the *Mahābhārata* as coming to Indra when Nārada is speaking about Damayantī. Śrīharṣa, on the other hand introduces them on the scene very late. They come after the departure of Nārada, and follow Indra, who is ready to start earthward (V.53).

(6) The *Mahābhārata* introduces Kali, when a long period has elapsed after the marriage of Nala and Damayantī, while Śrīharṣa introduces him (XVII) immediately after their marriage (XVI) and makes him witness their various enjoyments.

(7) Regarding the nature and number of boons bestowed upon the king by the gods, there is a considerable change. In the *Mahābhārata* each god confers two boons on the king, the number ultimately being eight. But Śrīharṣa makes Indra give four boons in all, one to Damayantī in a word-play and three to Nala. Of these, two are the same as in the *Mahābhārata* and one about the city which will be called Nalapura after his name. Agni is made to bestow three boons of which only one is common to the *Mahābhārata.* The other two are everlasting prosperity and a power to prepare sweet food. Yama confers two boons one of which is the same as in the *Mahābhārata.* The other one is proficiency in the use of weapons. Varuṇa's boons, however, are the same as in the *Mbh.* Then blessing of Saraswatī is a creation of the poet, as Nala's attainment of *cintāmaṇi mantra* is absent in the *Mahābhārata.* Similarly, two boons conferred upon Damayantī by the gods and the goddess Sarasvatī, *viz.* (i) 'Whosoever tries to molest you, will be turned to ashes'; and (ii) 'You shall have the power to acquire any form desired by you;', are also not met with in the *Mahābhārata.*

(8) But all these are minor changes when compared to the change introduced by Śrīharṣa regarding the characterization of Nala. Impelled by the gods, Nala in the *Mahābhārata* finds out a pretext by saying that it will not be possible for him to enter the well-protected apartments of Damayantī. To this Indra simply says: 'you shall enter.' Again the Nala of the *Mbh* introduces himself to Damayantī as Nala and does not try to conceal his identity as is done by Śrīharṣa's Nala, who cleverly evades Damayantī's queries about himself; and even repents when in his frenzy he unconsciously utters his name. "In Śrīharṣa's poem, Nala's anxiety is not how to reconcile self-interest with *dharma,* but how to reconcile his honour with the failure of his mission."[1] The Nala of the *Mbh* has the fear of gods which is not the case with Śrīharṣa's Nala, who appeals to his conscience.

Elaborations

Elaboration is an outstanding feature of the *Nc* which expands the first 158 verses of the epic story into an elaborate composition of 2827 verses. Following are the instances of elaboration in the *Nc*:

	Subject-matter	*Mbh.*	ĀP	*Nc*
(1)	Description of Nala	50. 1-4 &14		I. 1-30
(2)	Description of Damayantī on the threshold of youth.	50. 11-13		II. 17-39
(3)	Their mutual love	50. 15-16		I. 32-41 & 42-48
(4)	Nala's love-lorn condition and going to the garden.	50. 17		I. 49-116
(5)	His seeing golden swans and catching one of them.	50. 18		I. 117-128
(6)	The speech of the swan.	50. 19-20		I. 129-142
(7)	King's releasing the bird and its flight to Vidarbha.	50. 21		I. 143 to II. 72
(8)	Swans alighting near Damayantī, who pursues one of them.	50. 22-25		II. 107 to III. 12
(9)	Dialogue between the swan and Damayantī	50. 26-30		III. 13-128
(10)	Damayantī's love-lorn condition.	51. 1-4		IV. 1-114
(11)	Nārada and Parvata going to Indra. Their dialogue with Indra.	51. 11-21		V. 1-44
(12)	God's meeting with Nala on their way.	51. 26-27		V. 60-72
(13)	Dialogue between gods and Nala.	51. 28 to 52.10		V. 73-137
(14)	Damayantī as seen by Nala.	52. 11-12		VII. complete (1-109)
(15)	Dialogue between Damayantī and Nala.	52. 18 to 53. 11		VIII. 19 to IX complete (1-158)

(16)	Description of kings coming to attend the *svayaṃvara.*	51. 9-10 & 54. 1-2	X. 1-36
(17)	Description of the *svayaṃvara* hall.	54. 3	X. 57-66
(18)	Introduction of various kings.	54. 10	X. 7 to XIII. (4 cantos)
(19)	Damayantī's marriage.	54. 33	XV.complete (1-92) and XVI. 48-112.
(20)	Nala's enjoyments	54. 34, 37	XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI (1-6 & 119-162) XXII
(21)	Nala's religious zeal.	54. 36	XXI. 7-118
(22)	Encounter of gods with Kali accompanied by Dvāpara. Their dialogue with Kali.	55. 1-4	XVII. 109-221

Additions

Following are some additions which have no parallel in the *Mahābhārata* :

(1) Description of a horse (I.57-63), of trees (I.76-103), of a lake (I. 108-116), of the swan (I.117-123), of the city of Kuṇḍinapura (II. 73-106), of Damayantī's palace (VI. 59-72), of the love-pangs of Indra (V. 45-54 and VIII 61-70) and of other gods (VIII. 71-108), of the romantic experiences of Nala moving invisible in the apartments of Damayantī (VI. 10- 47), of Sarasvatī (X. 74-88), of specific kings (XI. 27 to XII. 106), of the marriage preliminaries (XV), of the nuptial ceremony (XVI. 13-47), of the entertainment of Nala and his party by Dama, the brother of Damayantī (XVI. 48-112), of Kali's host (XVII. 14-34), of the philosophy of the Cārvāka school, and its refutation by gods (XVII. 36-106), of Nala's capital (XVII. 163-204), of morning (XIX. 1-64), of Naḷa's jokes (XX.26-139) of Nala's daily programme (XXI. 1-162) and lastly of evening, darkness and moon rise (XXII. 3-148).

NEW CHARACTERS

Over and above these additions, the poet has invented some new characters also e.g., the female messenger of Indra (VI. 77-86), the goddess Sarasvatī (X.74 XIV.99); playful companion of Damayantī, viz., Kalā (XX. 26-139) and the materialist Cārvāka (XVI. 36-108) not to mention other minor characters – Lust, Wrath, Avarice and Delusion (XVIII. 16-34) personified by the poet.

FOOTNOTE

1. Handiqui: op.cit., p.26

Chapter Eight

As a Poet

The *Naiṣadhīyacarita* of Śrīharṣa is the last of the five *mahākāvyas* of the Sanskrit literature. The earlier two – viz. *Raghuvaṃśa* and *Kumārasaṃbhava* – both from Kālidāsa – stand in sharp contrast with the three subsequent ones. The *mahākāvyas* of Kālidāsa are simple and perspicuous. His style is *vaidarbhī*, which is characterised by perspecuity.

In case of the later poems the style underwent considerable change as per demand of the age. Thus in Bhāravi we find the signs of a new age – the age of learning. During this post-Kālidāsa period Bhaṭṭi introduced a new trend in his poem. He proudly proclaims that being fond of scholars he has purposely composed a poem difficult to understand without a commentary. The less intelligent will find it hard nut to crack but it will be a real feast to the erudities.[1] Bāṇa's fondness for the *double entendre* reached its climax in Subandhu who boasted of pun on every word (*pratyakṣara śleṣa*).

Rhetorics, *Kāmaśāstra* and *Arthaśāstra* also influenced later poets greatly. Thus we find preponderance of various figures, erotic descriptions of female form, the description of daily duties of kings and a political counselling (*mantra*) in the later poems.

Rhetoricians like Daṇḍi laid down characteristics of Sanskrit *kāvya*, in which the descriptions of morning and evening, of the rise and setting of the Sun and the Moon, the plucking of flowers and water-sports of damsels with their lovers etc. were a must. The later poets had therefore to exhibit their poetic skill under such hard and fast rules to win the title of a *mahākavi*.

This new trend of poetry is found for the first time in Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*. Māgha in order to excel Bhāravi, imitated him closely in all respects and consequently the critics declared

Māgha as superior to his predecessor.[2] Thus in these two poems we find that the narrative becomes subservient to the style. The manner predominates over the matter – or to put in the words of Rabindranath Tagore – "The story is only an umbrella-bearer, the language is the king."

Post-Māgha period was a period of scientific dialectics. In the tenth century a great dispute was going on between the *mīmāṃsakas* and the *naiyāyikas* regarding the existence of God, as is seen from the works written during this period. The Jain paṇḍits had disputes with non-Jain scholars and the former tried to excel the latter by divine grace of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning by chanting Her *Cintāmaṇi mantra.*

A scholar always hankered after vanquishing his adversary and getting a *jayapatra* (certificate of victory) from him. Somadeva, the author of *Yaśastilaka-campū* (A.D. 950) calls his work a by-product of his scholarship. He says – "Just as a cow yields milk by eating grass, similarly his intellect produced the beautiful utterances of his poetical composition by feeding on the dry logical studies to which he had devoted himslef since his childhood."[3]

(I) NC – A Product of Age of Learning

Śrīharṣa is also a product of this age of learning. He describes his poem as a reward of his chanting the *Cintāmaṇi mantra.* Like Bhaṭṭi he also takes pride "in making his poem abstruse in certain places to keep away the undeserving from dabbling into it and that only those who have drunk deep at the feet of their *gurus* can enjoy the pleasure of diving into it" (XX 11.154).

Śrīharṣa was primarily a philosopher and his philosophical work – the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya* a critique of Udayana's *Nyāya-Kusumāñjali* is the most abstruse work in the field of Vedānta. The anecdote recorded by Gadādhara tells us that Śrīharṣa wrote the *Nc* as a challenge to his detractors who abused him at his back as a dry *śamī* tree indulging in dry discussion of *tarka* (dialectics). To prove that he is equally at home in writing a poem full of eros he composed the *Nc.* Thus the *Nc* is also a by-product of Śrīharṣa's unparallelled scholarship.[4]

The *Nc* therefore abounds. in many philosophical doctrines. Śrīharṣa criticizes the *vaiśeṣika* view on the nature of darkness in XX 11.36. Here he playfully says that the *vaiśeṣika* school is fit

for determining the true nature of darkness as it is known as *aulūkya* system because it was revealed to sage Kaṇāda by Śiva in the form of an *ulūka* – owl. The theory regarding the nature of darkness was discussed by Śrīharṣa's predecessors like Vyomaśiva, Śrīdhara and Udayana. Śrīharṣa must have been well acquainted especially with the views of Udayana – his detractor – whom he playfully calls an owl.

The Nyāya concept of *mokṣa* is criticized in XVII. 75. According to *naiyāyikas, mokṣa* is a "colourless condition devoid of all attributes". Śrīharṣa compares it with a state resembling that of a stone and punningly condemns his propounder Gotama as *go-tama* (a bull *par excellence*). Śrīharṣa being a Vedānta scholar believes that the state of *mokṣa* is eternal bliss and thus takes a chance to ridicule the stony state of *mokṣa* of the Nyāya school.

The theory of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya* (self-validity of knowledge) is referred to in II. 61 in which Nala says to the swan that the benevolence of good proceeds from their own impulse, "Just as sense-perceptions become valid on their own account."

Another important doctrine of the *mīmāṃsakas* is their non-belief in god. The *naiyāyikas* on the other hand proved the existence of God whom they designated as Śiva. This controversy immediately preceding Śrīharṣa's time is referred to in XI. 64. Here he says :

"Just as the Mīmāṃsā philosophy does not accept the exalted Śiva, the jewel of whose fame is composed by all the Vedas with their utterances, and whose eternal endeavour is spontaneous for the sake of others; similarly Damayantī did not accept that king, the jewel of whose fame was fashioned by all with words true as the Vedas, and who ever spontaneously strove for other."[5]

The controversy about *karma* and God was carried on by the followers of the *mīmāṃsā, nyāya* and *vedānta* schools prior to Śrīharṣa's time. According to *mīmāṃsakas* it is *apūrva* that preserves the efficacy of *karmas* and gives rewards in the next birth; while the *nyāya* and the *vedānta* schools postulate a sentient omniscient God in place of insentient *apūrva* to reward the actions of human beings. These two beliefs are referred to in VI. 102 where Damayantī puts a question to her friends, interrupting her reply to Indra's messenger thus :

"Noble friends, a man has his mind dependent either on God

or on the current of the chain of causes of the succession of individual souls wandering without a beginning : does such a man, therefore, deserve censure (for thinking or acting in a particular way)?"

According to Gauḍapāda (*kārikas* IV. 83-84) the ultimate reality is beyond the four possible modes of prediction such as 'it exists', "it does not exist," etc. This vedantic doctrine of incomprehensibility of the reality is referred to in XIII. 36. When Damayantī is at a loss to recognise real Nala from four psuedo-Nalas, the poet says :

"Just as in the presence of a diversity of doctrines, people do not believe in the truth of monism, the fifth alternative, though truer; four other theories, wishing to win this (faith), being engaged in preventing such a belief (in monism) from gaining ground : similarly Damayantī, in the face of this doubt about Nala, did not believe in the reality of the fifth alternative, though more genuine than the rest, four other persons, desirous of winning her, having prevented her from acquiring such a trust."

References to such controversies carried on prior to Śrīharṣa's period have made his poem difficult. Without a learned commentary, one who is not familiar with them would find it difficult to grasp the real import of these verses. Hence the Naiṣadha is rightly described as *vidvadauṣadhaṃ* which means firstly that it is a bitter dose to scholars (not familiar with such controversies) and secondly that it is a brain tonic to scholars who can gauge the real implication.

Such a compliment to the poem suggests its popularity in the circle of erudites who paid a befitting tribute to the poet who is both a paṇḍit and a poet.

(2) *Elaboration*

Another striking feature of the poem is its elaboration of the narrative. The original story of Nala runs into about 182 *anuṣṭubh* verses. 158 out of them dealing with earlier life of Nala (upto his marriage) are elaborated in nearly 2827 verses in long varied classical metres.

The *Mahābhārata* disposes off the *svayaṃvara* in a few lines and makes only a passing reference to the marriage and the joy of Nala and Damayantī, while Śrīharṣa elaborates the former in

no less than five cantos (X-XIV) and the latter in seven cantos (XV-XVII and XVIII-XXII). Similarly the contents of cantos VI, VII and a greater portion of the XVII, are original additions of the poet.

Most of these elaborations are introduced by way of descriptions of human beings, bird, trees, lake, marriage preliminaries and ceremony, marriage banquet, morning, darkness and moon-rise.[5a]

(3) Descriptions

A special feature of descriptions of Śrīharṣa is this that his descriptions do not hang loose in the narrative but closely cling to the narrative. Thus the description of the trees in the garden of Nala shows throughout as to how they aggravate the love-pangs of Nala. Śrīharṣa has scrupulously avoided the insertion of descriptions of water-sports, flower-plucking etc. which have no direct bearing with the main thread. He goes off the track also by not following slavishly his predecessors Bhāravi and Māgha by aesthetically avoiding the *citrakāvya* in his poem.

His descriptions are made lively by personification, by the use of figures like *samāsokti, sleṣa* and *utprekṣā*. The pomegranate plant is personified (I. 83) as a love-lorn damsel :

"He saw a pomegranate plant, with birds on it, and with thorns clearly visible, as if it were a forlorn maiden, clearly thrilled at the memory of her beloved; while it had arrows of Cupid made of Palāśa flowers, namely, the beaks of parrots, piercing its rent and crimson heart, in the region of its breasts, its fruits."

(4) Figures of Speech

The wonderful character of the *Kuṇḍinapura* city is nicely depicted by *double entendre* in II.98 as follows :

"It was natural that the city, full of paintings, should contain all colours that were permanent; it was also natural that it should have a variety of tones, possessing as it did sounds from many a mouth."

By the force of pun the verse suggests another meaning :

"It was natural that the wonderful city should contain all the castes observing their customary rules; it was also natural that it should have a variety of accents, possessing as it did the sound

of the Vedas (lit. the sound of the many-mouthed Brahmā)."

The next important figure is *utprekṣā* wherein the different characteristics of Śrīharṣa's fancy are seen. In fact, this figure preponderates in the poem. Most of his *uptrekṣas* are original (*Cf.* I. 123, 2, 32). He derides the normal *upamānas* and introduces new and naive ideas. Dr. De (P. 327) describes his fancies as forensic and rhetorical. Sometimes they are fine (I. 47, 127; II.25; III.103, 117 etc.) while at times artificial and studied (VII. 99; X.119, 120, 124 etc.) being based on either a play upon words (XXII. 34, 49, 86, etc.) or on numerals (VII. 105, 107).

Let us see a few examples. The tying up of the hands of the bride and the bridegroom during marriage ceremony (XVI.14) is imagined as a punishment for their crime.

"The bridegroom's hand had taken delight in slaying others. The hand of the bride was a thief stealing the beauty of the lotus. Was it for this that their hands were tied with rough *kuśa* blades, in the well-governed kingdom of Vidarbha?"

The stars at the advent of twilight are nicely imagined as stones of a pomegranate spitted out after eating its seeds (XXII. 14).

"Death hath plucked yonder ripe pomegranate, the orb of the sun. Eating the seeds, he cast off its rind, the evening twilight; while he seems to have thrown out the starry stones of the fruits."

In XXII. 51, the rising reddish moon is compared with Śūrpaṇakhā's bloody face :

"Lo, devoid of ears and nose, and burdened with a stain, is not the scarlet-rayed moon, resembling Śūrpaṇakhā's face, ashamed to see thy countenance, lovely as Sītā's own?"

In the next verse the rising moon gradually getting whitish is imagined as counterfeit silver coin, guilded with gold :

"Dusk the Impostor gave a counterfeit gold coin, the reddening moon, to the sky; and took possession of the sun, heaven's radiant gem. Forthwith the coin turned out to be a pale piece of silver."

Śrīharṣa's use of such unique original and unparallelled *utprekṣas* can win for him the title of *utprekṣākavi* just as Kālidāsa is well-known as *upamākavi.*

Śrīharṣa surpasses his predecessors in the employment of the figure *śleṣa.*

A very clever use of this figure is found in III. 59 where the

expression *'dvijarājapāṇigrahābhilāṣa'* is to be understood punningly as (1) *dvijarāja* + *pāṇigrahābhilāṣa* (desire to catch the moon with hand) and (2) *dvija* + *rājapāṇigrahābhilāṣa* (Oh bird! the desire to get the hand of the king).

Equally felicitating pun is found in *'ceto nalaṃkāmayate madīyam* (III. 67) in which Damayantī conveying to swan that her mind does not hanker after Laṅkā (*ceto na laṅkām ayate*) ingeniously conveys by pun, her longing for Nala (*ceto nalaṃ kāmayate madīyam*).

His unsurpassable command over this figure is exhibited in XIII canto in which the Goddess Sarasvatī punningly describes four gods impersonating Nala and the real Nala. Here each stanza conveys two meanings. But Srīharṣa's command over this figure reaches its climax in XIII. 34 which yields five meanings referring to five Nalas.

Śrīharṣa seems to refer to himself dexterously and covertly as a *śleṣakavi* overtly applying this epithet to Damayantī (III. 69).

Equally interesting example of *upamā* based on *śleṣa* is met with in I. 32, in which entry of cupid into Damayantī's mind is punningly compared with the entry of Pradyumna in the city of Bāṇa.

The use of word-figure such as *anuprāsa* and *yamaka* is also abundant in the *Nc.*

An example of *pādānta yamaka* :
madhyeṣabham sāvatatāra bālā
gandharva-vidyādhara-kantha-nālā
trayīmayībhūta-valī-vibhaṅgā
sāhitya-nirvartita-dṛk-taraṅgā (X.74).

Another example :
atha bhīmabhujena pālitā nagarī manjurasau dharājitā
patagasya jagāma dṛkpatham haraśailopama-saudharājitā
(*II. 73*)

The figure *anuprāsa* (alliteration) is the very life of the poem. Not a single stanza is destitute of it. *Cf.*

aho ahobhir mahimā himāgame[7]
pyabhiprapede prati tām smarārditām
tapartupurtāvapi medasām bharā
vibhāvarībhir bibharāmababhūvire // (I. 41)

One may open any page and may recite any verse of the poem, one will hear the jingling diction of the poem. Therefore it has been rightly claimed for the poem that it abounds in jingling music of diction *"Naiṣadhe padalālityaṃ"*.

The fondness for alliteration and rhyme from among word-figures and for paronomasia from among the sense-figures makes Śrīharṣa's poetry stand in sharp contest with that of Kālidāsa, whose poetry becomes at once intelligible to the readers by the presence of *prasāda guṇa* (perspicuity) which is absent, though not totally, in Śrīharṣa who culls obscure words from lexicons for alliteration and rhyme and who is fond of paronomasia which is by its very nature incompatible with the *prasādaguṇa*. The excess of *mādhurya* (sweetness) and *ojas* (vigour) in Śrīharṣa, need not lead one to think that the *prasāda* is totally absent in his poem, because, when the poet is not obsessed by these two figures mentioned above, we do see perspicuous stanzas such as :

madekaputrā jananī jarāturā navaprasūtir varaṭā tapasvinī /
gatistayoreṣa janastamardayannaho vidhe tvām karuṇā
ruṇaddhi na // (I. 135);

But such instances are rare as compared with those of Kālidāsa. In short, in his speeches the poet generally tries to be simple and perspicuous, while in the descriptions he generally prefers to be bombastic and vigorous by the use of various figures and long compounds.

Another figure, which is often employed by our poet, is *paryāyokta* or circumlocution. It was an age in which the people liked the ideas expressed in a round about manner. Thus Śrīharṣa describes Damayantī as *sadasatsaṃśayagocarodarī* (II. 40) (one whose belly is under the range of doubt whether it exists or not) and *Īśāṇimaiśvaryavivartamadhye*, (III. 64) (one whose middle portion of the body, i.e., the waist, is a phenomenon of the supernatural power called minuteness, of Lord Śiva) instead of using a simple phrase *kṛśodarī* (one whose belly is thin). Kuntaka, the author of *Vakroktijīvita*, calls such expressions as *paryāyavakrokti*. The examples of *śleṣavakrokti* (crooked speech based on pun) are met with in IV. 102-109. Love-lorn Damayantī's friend consoles her: "Have patience, give up unreasoned fear, it is the cool-rayed moon that rises."

To this Damayantī sarcastically retorts : "It is clearly burning me with the heat of a smouldering fire, friend, thou dost eclipse feeling with words" (IV. 105).

(5) Delineation of Rasas

Śrīharṣa's skill of delineating the *rasas* is also charming. The main sentiment of the *Nc* is eros. But here the hero and heroine do not fall in love with each other at first sight as in case of Duṣyanta in the *Abhijñānaśākuntala.* Here both Nala and Damayantī are shown to love each other by hearing mutual qualities.

Again the *Nc* begins with the *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* and ends with the *saṃbhoga śṛnāgāra.* The love-lorn condition of Nala is effectively presented in I. 49-106; while the entire fourth canto describes the love-lorn condition of Damayantī very pathetically.

The *saṃbhoga śṛṅgāra* is described in the eightheenth canto. Here in the description of the dalliance of the hero and the heroine the whole Kāmaśāstra is fully ransacked.

A beautiful picture of Damayantī as a *mugdhā nāyikā* is given in XVIII. 35 :

"For fear she entered not her consort's apartment. When persuaded to enter it, she occupied not the bed. Though induced to occupy the bed, she did not lie close to him. Though persuaded to lie down, she turned not her face towards him."

Gradually she becomes *pragalbhā* (bold) and cooperates in love-game :

"That she did not draw back her face when kissed, showered nectar in her consort's heart. No longer she pushed back his hand when he placed it on her. Was not his whole being gratified at this?"

Śrīharṣa is equally at home in delineating other *rasas* also.

He presents a very pathetic picture of swan captured by Nala. Here the pathos is evoked by his censure to Nala (I. 130-133) or by his reproach to fate (I. 138). Pathetic picture of his old mother, (I. 135-136), helpless wife (I. 137-140) and the orphan new-born babes (I. 141-142) are very effective.

"I am the only son of my aged mother, my poor wife has new-born children, and I am their only support; thou Fate who persecutest me, it is strange that pity holdeth thee not in check."

"Brisk-eyed one, certainly wilt thou to-day see all the ten

fronts of the directions void, when fellow birds will have told thee this piece of news about me, like the stroke of a thunderbolt."

"Children! calling whom with your cooings for a long while, shaking your mouths at whom, will you learn to speak?" Having fainted with these words, the bird regained consciousness, being drenched with the king's flowing tears."

Other sentiments also have their due share in the poem e.g. the heroic sentiment is described in the valorous acts of Nala and other kings present at the *svayaṃvara*.

Adbhuta is presented in the description of Nala's moving invisibly in the palace of Damayantī.

The *hāsya rasa* is delineated at the time of marriage banquet where the relatives of Nala are entertained by Damayantī's brother.

The Popularity of the Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ

There is ample evidence to show that the *Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ* became popular in different parts of the country soon after its composition.

According to an epilogue stanza (XXII. 131) the *Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ* was approved by the critics of Kashmir which was then a seat of learning and an approval of which was essential for any literary work for its public use.

In Gujarat, Mahendra Sūri, a pupil of Hemacandrācārya (A.D. 1088-1172) quotes verses from the *Nc*. A Ms. of the *Nc* brought by Harihara, a descendent of Śrīharṣa was overnight got copied down by the minister Vastupāla (13th cent.). The earliest two commentaries by Vidyādhara and Cāṇḍū Paṇḍita were written in Gujarat. The *Nc* was equally popular among the Jain scholars as is seen by their commentaries and its praise or quotations therefrom in their works. Meghavijaya Upādhyāya has composed *Śāntinātha-carita* also called *Naiṣadhīyasamasyā* by taking one or two lines from the first canto of the *Nc* and adding others from his own.

The popularity of the *Nc* in Bengal is borne out by its influence on Bengali literature from the time of Jayadeva onwards. It had a distinct place in the curriculum of studies right from the early period.[7] As such many commentaries were written on it.

The popularity of the *Nc* all over India is evinced by a big number of commentaries (as many as 50) written on it in different parts of the country viz. Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Vārāṇasī

(U.P.), Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra and South India right from the time of its composition upto the present century.

The *Nc* was translated into Telugu by Śrīnātha in the 15th century and into Hindi by Gumāna Miśra in A.D. 1769.

A widespread study of the *Nc* can be inferred not only from its influence on provincial literatures, its adaptations, abridgements or poetic summaries by scholars but also from extensive quotations therefrom in different anthologies.[8]

Thus by intrinsic literary merits this learned poem has overshadowed as many as 350 poems of Sanskrit literature and has won the covetable designation of *mahākāvya* along with the works of Kālidāsa, Bhāravi and Māgha.

A befitting tribute is given to Srīharṣa by one of his commentators Viśveśvara (alias Gāgā) Bhatta : Many poets were born in the past, many are there at present and many more shall be born in time to come. But let the non-jealous frank poets admit the fact that who else other than Śrīharṣa Sūri can dare to ascend the literary throne of all quarters of the country?[9]

FOOTNOTES

1. *dīpatulyaḥ prabandho'yam śabdalakṣaṇa-cakṣuṣām /*
   hastāmarśa ivāndhānāṃ bhaved vyākaraṇād ṛte //
   vyākhyāgamyamidam kāvyam utsavaḥ sudhīyamalam /
   hatā durmedhasaścāsmin vidvāt-priyatayā mayā //
2. *tāvad bhā bhāraver bhāti yāvan māghasya nodayaḥ /*
   udite tu punar māghe bhāraver bhā raverva //
3. Handiqui K.K. : *Yaśastilaka* and *Indian Culture*, P. 10.
4. Vide *Nc* (Jani) : App. 4 (P. 14-15).
5. Translation of verses (here and elsewhere, where quoted) is taken from Handiqui's book.

5a. For details vide ch. VII

6. For more examples vide quotations given in Ch. 2.
7. Vide Rajendralal Mitra, *Notices* Vol. I. No. 302.
8. *Nc* (Jani) : P. 278.
9. *jāyante kati jajñire kati janiṣyante katīha kṣitau*
   sraṣṭāro nitarām idam tu kavibhir nirmatsaraiḥ kathyatām /
   āpūrvāparadakṣiṇottaraharit-sāhityasiṃhāsana-
   svairārohaparākramam bhajatu kaḥ srīharṣasūreḥ paraḥ //
   (*Cat.* Sk. Mss., Tanjore, Vol. XIX, P. 2556).

Abbreviations

Burnell : A classified Index to the Skt. Mss. in the palace at Tanjore, by A.C. Burnell, London, 1880.

Cal.Ori. Jl. : Calcutta Oriental Journal.

CC : Catalogus Catalogorum by Aufrecht, Leipzig, Vol. I, 1891; Vol. II, 1896; Vol. III, 1903.

Comm. : Commentator.

Ed (n). : Edition, Edited.

HIP : History of Indian Philosophy.

HSL : History of Sanskrit Literature.

IA : Indian Antiquary.

JBBRAS : Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

JMSU : Journal of the M.S. University Baroda

Khaṇḍana : Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya of Śrīharṣa.

L : Notices of Sanskrit. Mss. by Rajendralal Mitra, Calcutta, 1871-90.

Mbh : Mahābhārata.

Mitra : Notices of Sanskrit by Rejendralal Mitra, Calcutta 1871-90, II Volumes. Vols. X & XI are by Haraprasad Śāstrī.

Nc (Jani) : A Critical Study of Śrīharṣa's Naiṣadhīyacaritaṃ

O.I : Oriental Institute, Baroda

Report : Detailed report of a tour in search of Sanskrit Mss. made in Kashmir, Rajaputana and Central India by G.Bühler, Extra no. of *JBBRAS*, Bombay 1877.

RM : Rāmāyaṇa

Tanjore : A Des. Cat. of the Sanskrit Mss. in the Tanjore Mahārājā Serfoji's Sarasvatī Mahal Library. Tanjore, by P.P.S. Śāstrī in 19 Vols.

YT : Yaśastilaka and Indian Culture by K.K. Handiqui. Jīvarāja Jaina Granthamālā No.2. Sholapur 1949.

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Śrīharṣa, the author of *Naiṣdhīyacaritam* and *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyam* was primarily a philosopher. *Naiṣdhīyacaritam,* the last of the five *mahākāvyas* describes the amorous play of Nala and Damayanti–though abstruce in character, is a brain tonic to erudites–*naiṣadham vidvatauṣadham.*

The monograph in eight chapters presents a detailed account of Śrīharṣa, his time, his erudition, his status as a *mahākavi* etc.

Prof. Arunoday N. Jani (*b.* 1921) is an outstanding scholar in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. Retired as Professor and Head, Department of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali, M.S. University, Baroda, he has served the Oriental Institute, Baroda (1975-1981).

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